



Education Committee

by MGV Mary Wolverton

Every year questions arise as to what constitutes approved continuing education. The answers to all our questions are contained in the Onboarding course found on the UW-Madison Canvas site. Here is a link to Canvas: <https://canvas.wisc.edu> (Click on “log in to Canvas” blue button).

Many MGVs confuse Canvas, ORS and our website so, if this happens to you, you are not alone. To clarify:

SEWMG Website (www.sewmg.org) – the ‘go to’ site for information about our association
ORS – (ors.wimastergardener.org) the UW Extension site to record CE and volunteer hours and input information about volunteer organizations

Canvas – (link above) the site for online classes offered by UW-Madison which include our MG Onboarding course and MG Onboarding Lite. *You probably have different usernames and passwords for all three sites.* Be sure to use the correct one when accessing each site.

If you don’t want to continue to access and navigate Onboarding Lite you can download all of it as a PDF. If you choose this option be sure to check back each year for updates so you have the most current information.

I recently asked Extension for clarification of the rules as some misinformation was circulating. They said: *When determining continuing education individuals need to use the Continuing Education Checklist.* They need to apply the information regarding the event towards the checklist. There are three questions pertaining to continuing education that they need to ask:

- **Does it occur within the year you want to report it?** (We follow a Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 reporting year.)

- **Does it pertain to appropriate subject matter?** (Refer to the Subject Matter section in Onboarding.)

- **Is the source of information appropriate?** (Refer to the Sources of Information section.) If a MGV can say yes to the 3 main questions in bold above, you can count the CE opportunity.

If you read through the rules you will find there is no prohibition on a speaker being compensated by fee or honorarium. There also is no prohibition on an otherwise qualified speaker selling books at an event.

The site contains a Continuing Education Checklist which provides some additional detail. In subject matter they require:

- That the topic be related to the growing, maintenance and education of terrestrial plants (i.e., ornamental and edible plants)
- That the topic be related to connecting terrestrial plants with communities, habitats and people
- That the topic not fall in the Out of Bounds table, a 14 point table which covers things like mushrooms, medicine, hardscaping and crops to name a few.

For the source of the information they ask:

- Is the source an educator, researcher or regulator representing a preferred source? (good)
- Is the source an established industry professional providing information in an unbiased way? (good)
- Is the source trying to sell you a product or service? (bad)
- Is the source lobbying for a specific point of view? (bad)

Onboarding goes on to provide examples and more detail. Using this you should be able to make a good judgment as to the appropriateness of any program.

What is “No Mow May”? No mowing our lawns for the month of May? What are the benefits of not cropping our lawns in spring? Join us for the Southeastern Wisconsin Master Gardener February meeting. Ann Wied, Horticulture/Community Development Outreach Specialist with UW-Madison will be our speaker. She will answer these questions and tell us all the benefits of “No Mow Day” via zoom on February 17th, 10am.

Renew Your SEWMG Membership for 2024

by MGV Betsy Vokac

It's easy to renew your membership in SEWMG. The fee is \$20, which includes membership in both SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners (SEWMG) and the Wisconsin Master Gardener Program (WIMGA). Dues are payable by January 1, 2024.

To renew using the SEWMG website, click the MEMBERS tab at the top of the page, then select Forms from the drop-down

menu. You can click to pay using a credit card, debit card or PayPal. It's easy to pay this way, and it also saves time for the folks processing your dues.

If you prefer to mail a check, no worries. The application form is included in this newsletter. Or, click this link to bring up the information on your computer: <https://sewmg.org/forms>.



_____ **MEMBERSHIP DUES** _____
Year _____

Name (First, Last): _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Please indicate below any skills/special talents you might be willing to share with the organization:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graphics/Displays | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations | <input type="checkbox"/> Web Design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry | <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> GoDaddy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching/Presentations | <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising | <input type="checkbox"/> MS Excel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing/Editing | <input type="checkbox"/> Event Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> MS PowerPoint |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Web Surveys | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography/
Videography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

Annual dues is \$20.00 and includes membership in both SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners (SEWMG) and Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association (WIMGA). SEWMG will pay your WIMGA dues directly.

Make your check payable to **SEWMG** and mail to:

SEWMG Membership
P.O. Box 26453
Wauwatosa, WI 53226

We welcome all certified MGVs who volunteer in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties.

From the Board

by MGV Valorie Sangsland, Board Chair



In past newsletter articles, I've quoted John F. Kennedy, compared our members to compost and enthused about the volunteer opportunities that Board and Committee activities afford our members who are employed full-time or are unable to work in gardens due to physical or time constraints.

For this, my farewell article, I will once again resort to analogy. When discussing perennial beds with the public, we describe expectations for new plantings with the following phrase "the first year they sleep, the second year they creep, the third year they leap."

It's been two years since the major UW-Extension changes related to the Master Gardener program. While we had quality root-stock (members), we needed to re-invent our Association based on the revised policies and expectations. We spent the first year getting our feet under ourselves, figuring out what we could and couldn't do, making certain we were financially sound, fiscally responsible and appropriately insured. We participated in just one public event, the 2022 Wisconsin State Fair. To many, it might have appeared we were sleeping.

In 2023, our second year of the new reality, we expanded our forays into the public. We staffed multi-day events like the Realtors Home & Garden Show in March and the Wisconsin State Fair in August, providing hundreds of hours of volunteer opportunities for our members and expanding our name recognition with the public. LifeLong Gardening did many presentations, and earned \$625 in honoraria for our association.

Our members returned to multiple Farmers Markets, and staffed the Boerner Garden Cart this past summer. SEWMG participated in multiple additional public events—two Dockhounds events, the Greendale Garden Walk, Greenfield Forestry Event, and the Waukesha County Fair. We held six Neighborhood Social Gatherings for the sole purpose of encouraging comradery amongst SEWMG members who live geographically close to one another. We also became more focused on our Social Media communications with a set schedule of topics for the year. We had started to creep.

What happens next, in 2024, is bound to be exciting. At our Annual Meeting in November, member Patrick Smith offered to spearhead a new Fund-Raising program. During the past few years, after the retirement of the Plant Sale committee and with no volunteers to assume their roles, we have been running the Association at an annual deficit. Recognizing that this reduced our financial reserves, we were very conservative with our budgeted spending. A steady source of incoming funds will be needed in order to pay for future major program expansions: conferences, new outreach efforts, premier educational speakers, perhaps even a plant sale. My point is that SEWMG is ready to leap in 2024 and we have a fresh leadership team ready to guide you through this exciting phase in our growth. I encourage you to become involved in any way that interests you! With your help, our third year is bound to be spectacular! Wishing you all the best in 2024!

2024 Officers

<i>Past President</i>	<i>Eileen Quinlan</i>
<i>President</i>	<i>Jane Belanger</i>
<i>Vice President</i>	<i>Jackie Kirchen</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Geneen Miresse</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Belinda Brocker</i>
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<i>2nd Year Director</i>	<i>Sandy Potter</i>
<i>1st Year Director</i>	<i>Thomas Johnson</i>
<i>Director at Large</i>	<i>Raymond Corn</i>
<i>Director at Large</i>	<i>Carol Belonger</i>

President's Letter

by MGV Jane Belanger



Prior to 2018. I did not realize the Master Garden program existed. I was stuck in reorganizing and purging my home after years of overtime and single person home maintenance. My daughter learned about a pot-a-thon through online searching and we stopped by for some information gathering. I took the Foundations in Gardening class in 2019 and then Covid curtailed volunteering until 2022. My first volunteer location was the State Fair Gardens.

Mary Wolverton approached me to join the 2023 board. As Vice-president/President Elect I was already on the Audit and Budget committees and I joined the Membership and Strategic Planning committees as well. My experiences so far have given me a good basic knowledge of the workings of SEWMG. I've met and talked with many of you and look forward to more conversations with even more of you. You may also remember I organized volunteer groups at The Garden District Neighborhood gardens on 6th street and Howard Avenue and The Conservancy for Healing and Heritage in Franklin.

As master gardeners we have access to all the volunteer garden locations in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties approved by UW Extension. We have access to all of the educational material provided by Extension. But as SEWMG members we can participate in member meetings with educational speakers, sharing our knowledge with the community at Farmers' markets, the Home and Garden Show, the annual State Fair. As part of the Lifelong Gardening Group and/or the Speaker's Bureau we can share gardening knowledge at scheduled speaking engagements. We can participate and help organize Neighborhood Gatherings for area specific members, the SEWMG picnic and the Holiday Party.

During this last year I have worked with a highly capable, knowledgeable, well organized group of people. From the committees that they lead to the activities they organize we should be proud and supportive of our organization and its individual members. This is our strength.

Having been part of WIMGA's president's September Zoom meeting we are all facing similar challenges. The biggest is declining membership numbers which impacts all aspects of our organization. Another is future fundraising. However, our southeast organization is ahead of the other groups in social media use and information technology.

A big part of a president's job is listening to our members' comments. This year we need to address the ideas and suggestions that will grow and improve our organization. Strategic Planning's Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusivity initiative tells us that more voices, more ideas will strengthen our organization.

I've volunteered two summers during the State Fair and each year I encountered people who couldn't join their groups in the gardens because they are not wheelchair accessible. We should

be able to work out with State Fair management a garden friendly solution for wheelchairs, walkers, etc.

One fellow gardener suggested more Trips and Tours. I agree. I would have gone to the Madison Conference this past January but for me it was too soon in our Covid journey. (And I say this in my second week of being Covid positive, with a burning cough, and no taste or sense of smell, etc.).

Tours in the Milwaukee/Waukesha area where we drive individually and meet as a group could have been a safer choice with more participation.

We have someone who would like to organize a Milwaukee annual Garden Conference. How better to promote SEWMG? To generate funds? And we have someone who WANTS to do it!

I'd like us to see things with fresh eyes. Let's look at everything we do and ask what will make this better? The example I'll use is the ten days of the State Fair. One volunteer suggested a better takeaway for kids at the State Fair and another wants to see speakers in the gardens there. Visitors to the State Fair are drawn in by hawkers and that's kind of how they're moved along. When they get to our garden area there is little to draw them in, aside from a respite to the crowds and noise, and beautifully tended gardens. But then what?

Shouldn't we have at least two stations where we are talking about something? Composting? Pollinators? Annuals vs. perennials? Low level hawking. Couldn't we have small garden tools for the kids to take home to actually make them think about gardening? I have a four inch plastic shovel my daughter got with an order of fruit fly paper. I'm an adult and I like it. It makes me smile. Couldn't we sell an extended visor baseball cap or garden hat that says "Wisconsin Grown"? Something other Fairgoers will take note of and ask, "Hey, where'd you get that?" Maybe you'll think my ideas are dumb or crazy but maybe they'll help you think of something that will be even better. The point is, let's try to look at what we already do well and see it with fresh eyes to make it better or even exceptional.

Master Gardener is a title respected by many. And it should be. We share a love of gardening and gain hours of education. SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners deserve to be better promoted and better respected.

What does 2024 look like to you? Everyone reading and actually thinking about that question will have a different answer. Answers based on individual needs, goals, our surroundings and the people who make up our circle of family and friends and the experiences that have formed our perspectives.

When I look at 2024 for SEWMG I realize that we have huge opportunities to build on a strong well run organization.

Contact Jane with your thoughts at janeabel1002@yahoo.com

Ginseng: a Wisconsin Thing!

by MGV Cheryl Lausten

Panax quinquefolius, or American ginseng is a slow growing, understory native herb that is a member of the ivy family. Many cultures have used the fleshy root as an herbal supplement for centuries.* It is touted for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects. American ginseng was one of the earliest American exports to China and is still harvested and sold internationally today.

Ginseng prefers a high canopy of shade from mixed hardwood trees; therefore, it typically appears in deep forest areas with 70 to 90 percent shade. It needs good drainage, so wild plants are usually found on north or east facing slopes.

In the early days, ginseng was abundant throughout the deciduous forests of the United States from the Midwest to Maine. These plants in the wild are now rare. Native plants were over harvested by “seng” hunters because of their monetary value. Its slow growth, low seed production, and loss of forest habitat has added to its decline. The loss of one reproductive plant before it has a chance to produce seeds has a significant impact on the wild population. Because the slow growing plant is destroyed to harvest the root, it is important to only harvest plants with ripe seeds and then plant those seeds. It is now illegal to pick wild ginseng without a permit. Ginseng is protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) since 1975. Native plants are now on the restricted list with 19 states regulating harvest. A permit and limits to amounts harvested are now in effect to conserve remaining native plants.

Despite its extremely specific growing conditions, ginseng can be cultivated. Growers cultivating ginseng must meet state requirements, register, and obtain permits. Sown seeds can be either woods grown, wild-simulated or field grown, depending on the conditions available. It was found that conditions in Central Wisconsin were favorable for field grown with the addition of artificial shade consisting of posts, lattice, and shade fabric.

Now, more than 90% of the cultivated ginseng grown in the United States comes from Wisconsin, and 90-95% of the Wisconsin grown plant is produced in Marathon County. Records show that over 5,000 acres of ginseng

grows in the county with sales nearing \$70 million. Wausau is actually known as the ginseng capital of the world. In 2017, ginseng was officially designated as Wisconsin’s state herb by then Governor Scott Walker.

Wisconsin ginseng is highly valued because of its higher levels of ginsenosides, the major pharmacologically active components of the root. Wisconsin now supplies most of the ginseng sent abroad and in the states. It has become big business! I wonder if you have ever noticed the acres of shaded ginseng fields on a drive to Northern Wisconsin.

Ginseng can also be grown in your home gardens but requires patience, as it takes about four years to grow a root worth harvesting. If native ferns, wild ginger, trillium, and foamflower thrive in your shade garden, your conditions are favorable for growing ginseng.

Feeling adventurous, try growing your own Ginseng Root.

Please note: * University of Wisconsin Extension does not advocate using plants for medicinal purposes.



Meet the Incoming Co-Chairs of SEWMG's Speakers Bureau

by MGV Jean Akhter

Terri Hart-Ellis and Jean Akhter are excited to represent the SEWMG Speakers Bureau as Co-Chairs for 2024. While Terri is a new MGV this year, she has been a master naturalist volunteer for a few years. She is a nature and macro photographer, writer, and disability activist. She founded a disability equity group and ran programs with speakers for many years; she also planned and executed an annual regional event. She currently teaches photography, works as a consultant on clean water and air projects, while serving as primary caregiver for her adult disabled daughter.

Jean has been a MGV for 11 years. Her professional background is in elementary education—teaching and administration. She has volunteered on a variety of projects over the past decade and has made SEWMG speaking presentations to the Realtors Home and Garden Show, Franklin Public Library, and Friends of Boerner Botanical Garden, to name a few.

Terri and Jean are excited to have the opportunity to work with you. If you are interested in embracing SEWMG's goal of public education on approved gardening topics, we would love to hear from you. Feel free to contact us via email so we can add your name to our list of volunteers who are willing to make presentations. For those of you already making presentations please reach out to us with any community requests you receive for presentations or support you need from us to facilitate your speaking needs.

To make presentations on behalf of SEWMG keep the following guidelines in mind:

Begin by watching the Speakers Bureau training video on making presentations on behalf of SEWMG for important details. Follow the steps below.

- Go to sewmg.org
- Click on the ACTIVITIES drop down menu
- Select OUTREACH
- Scroll down to Public Presentations click here tab
- Login to your account (OR) create an account for new users
- Scroll down to Public Presentations
- Press red start button to begin the training video

Use only presentations that are on the SEWMG approved list. Present research-based information about gardening and yard care.

Please email both Terri and Jean when corresponding with the Speakers Bureau. Terri will coordinate scheduling with volunteers and community organizations. Jean will work on program support and development.

We thank Susan Taylor and Mary Wolverton for their guidance and support as we transition into our roles as Co-Chairs of the Speakers Bureau for 2024 and look forward to working with you in the upcoming year.

You may contact Jean and Terri via email at:
Jean Akhter, jean.admin07@gmail.com
Terri, terrihartellis@gmail.com

Listed below are some of the organizations that have requested SEWMG presentations.

Whitefish Bay Garden Club
Fox Point Garden Club
South Shore Garden Club
New Berlin Garden Club
SumMerDel Garden Club
St. Francis Public Library
Franklin Public Library
Realtor's Home and Garden Show
Friends of Boerner Botanical Garden
Washington Park Senior Center
St. Jacobi Lutheran Ladies Aid
Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition
4H
Greendale Lions Club
Ten Chimneys
GE Medical
Aurora Hospital – Grafton
Advocate Aurora Health (Aurora Sinai)
ProHealth Care Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital
ProHealth Care Waukesha Memorial Hospital

Seed Starting: Winter Sowing

by MGV Brad Terp

In our last issue, Brad discussed tips on starting seeds indoors. Here is another method that he has used and found great success with:

A few years ago I thought I would try the “Milk Jug Winter Sowing” method. I watched a few videos, followed some Facebook groups and had enough knowledge to start off with 32 jugs, each with a different seed variety. I planted them up in January and set them out on my patio, and almost everything germinated except for a couple things. This method works great for native plants, and seeds that require cold/moist stratification, but it worked equally well with tomato seeds. Each seed germinated when it was ready and in mid May I had a wealth of plants. Many of them I pricked out and put in small pots till I could plant them in the ground.

I highly recommend this method for anyone who is timid with seed starting or who simply doesn't have the time or space to start seeds inside their home. In a nutshell, small holes must be punched in the bottom of the plastic jug, to allow water to drain out; using scissors cut around the jug just under the handle and stop cutting at the handle so there is a hinge at the handle (about 5 inches of soil in the jug is ideal for best root space/growth); place moist soil in the jug, plant seeds, place a label inside the jug (super important); clamp the two halves of the jug together and secure the cut with duct tape, all around the jug. Remove the cap (very important), as this allows natural moisture to get in, and air flow/exchange. I often label the outside of the jug with a paint marker to have a backup on labeling. Set the jug outside and don't worry about it. If it's mid-winter and there hasn't been any snow or rain, a little extra sprinkling from a watering can is a good idea. No need to remove snow collected on the jug, just sit back and wait for winter to be over.

2024 - Year of the Angelonia

by MGV Kelly Kramer

Every year the National Garden Bureau publishes their “Year Of” list of plants. Here's the lineup for 2024: Houseplant – African Violet, Bulb – Lily, Perennial – Hosta, Edible – Squash, Annual - Angelonia, and Shrub – Buddleia.

I was happy to see Angelonia chosen for the annual. Angelonia plants are a favorite of mine for containers and bedding plants. I consider them a low maintenance annual.

Native to Mexico and the West Indies, the botanical name is *Angelonia angustifolia* and they are often known by their common name “summer snapdragon.” However, Angelonia and Snapdragons are not related.

The upright varieties are most common, but there are new varieties that cascade and some that are mounded. So you could have container plants of a thriller, spiller, and filler all of Angelonia.

They are available in shades of pink, purple, and white. Some are scented. Pictured here is Angelonia “Dark Rose” from my garden. This variety was about 16 inches tall and 10-12 inches wide and bloomed all summer into fall.

These are full sun annuals that don't require any deadheading. They appreciate good drainage (don't they all) and once established they can dry out between waterings. I've found them to be very drought tolerant. They are light feeders. I usually fertilize them once a month.

Angelonia holds up well in the summer heat, which may be nice to think about this time of year.

This plant is listed as being deer and rabbit resistant. I have found rabbits will nibble on the leaves if they don't find other food sources nearby. However, in summer there are usually plenty of other choice morsels for rabbits. My Echinacea plants come to mind.

Whatever plants you choose for your garden this year I hope it's a “Year of” beauty.



Annual Holiday Celebration

by MGVs Diane Thieme and Laurie Baker

This year's SEWMG holiday celebration was held at Alioto's Restaurant on Wednesday, December 6. Sixty members enjoyed the wonderful opportunity to visit with many old and new friends before dining on a delicious dinner.

As part of the evening, Bill Shaffer was honored for his twenty years of service to SEW. His widow, Kay, was there to accept the much-deserved award in his name. She spoke of Bill's love of plants and volunteering, particularly as part of the plant sale committee.

The evening ended with the drawing of door prize winners. Winners took home gorgeous hand knit scarves made and donated by Kay Shaffer, holiday packages, a spa package, plants, puzzles, and more. The highlight of the drawings was the joy that Tom and Sue Paasch displayed when they won the coveted three-foot-tall Christmas decorated reindeer. It is already standing proudly on their dining room table.

A lovely evening was had by all. Make your plans to join the fun at next year's party.



News from the County Extension Office

by Ann Wied, UW-Madison Waukesha County Extension Outreach Specialist

New Series of Mini Webinars to Begin in February

There will be new online mini webinars beginning in February. All are FREE but registration is required. Please share with family and friends. These are open to the public. All are recorded if you cannot watch them live. Go to: <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/> and look for "Webinars for WI Gardeners" under "upcoming programs".

This is an easy way to earn Continuing Education (CE). Take advantage of these CE opportunities when you are snuggled up inside for winter. Some may be a review of what you already know but some may be new topics for you. Remember to check out the recordings of past webinars if you want to earn more CE.

What's the Deal with "No Mow May" - Update

You have probably heard about "No Mow May" where people have committed to not mowing their yards in May, allowing flowering plants to grow to help provide food for pollinators. Extension staff and specialists wrote an article, promoted it last May, and it is housed on the Wisconsin Horticulture website (<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/whats-the-deal-with-no-mow-may/>). If you have not read it, I encourage you to do so.

I am leading a team of horticulture educators and state specialists on a statewide initiative to develop some additional educational materials regarding "No Mow May" that are directed to the consumer/residential landscapes. These educational materials will include a new handout (i.e., fact sheet), a Facebook post, and a news release. The fact sheet will be a great hand-out at programs, State Fair, etc. There will also be a power point presentation with script on this topic. (The power point may not be available for use by Master Gardeners to use right away. I should know more in February/March.) Plans are to launch the materials in March or early April right as the lawn care season is picking up.

As master gardeners it is important for you to be armed with the facts regardless of your opinion on this topic. Remember, as with any gardening or horticulture topic, our job is to share the science-based facts (educate).

Curious about the objectives for our powerpoint presentation and educational materials? They are to help the consumer:

- Understand what "No Mow May" means, the impacts of unmowed lawns and how it affects pollinators.
- Identify pollinator friendly lawn care strategies that a homeowner can use

- Identify gardening practices that support pollinators in residential yards.
- Understand best practices for caring for their lawn in June if a homeowner decides to participate in "No Mow in May".
- Know where to find resources for lawn care, pollinators, pollinator friendly gardening, etc.

I hope I can count on you to get out the word about these educational materials once they are available. Ways to do this could be sharing a Facebook post, handing out the Fact Sheet at MG volunteer sites/events or sharing this information with friends, family, or neighbors when the topic arises.

We hope to launch this information in March/early April when other "No Mow May" promotional materials are starting to ramp up via Facebook and other forms of media. Watch for an email from me when materials are ready to share out. Reach out if you have questions.

Watch for an email from SEWMG announcing details about a Saturday, February 17, 10 AM SEWMG meeting held via Zoom. During this meeting I will be giving a presentation on "No Mow May".

Are you on Facebook?

If you are on Facebook, consider following Waukesha County Extension at: <https://www.facebook.com/ExtensionWaukeshaCo/> Your local Milwaukee/Waukesha County MG association - the SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners (SEWMG) - also has a Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/sewiscmg> Both Facebook sites have regular gardening posts. Please consider "liking" and sharing posts to your Facebook page.



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Our Mission Statement

"We are Master Gardeners who serve as a resource in the art and science of gardening to cultivate community connections."