

# SELF-INITIATED PERFORMANCE REVIEW

## UW-Extension, Cooperative Extension, East-Metro Region

**Name:** Patti Nagai

**County:** Racine County

**Title:** Horticulture Educator, Associate Professor

**Review Period:** January 1, 2013- December 31, 2013

**Program Accomplishments:** Briefly highlight the impact of your professional contributions this past year. Include success stories and other impacts from your program.

**Horticulture program accomplishments in 2013 include:**

**1. Master Gardener Volunteer training and support of activities and community projects**

a. Master Gardener Level 1 Training – 12 sessions for beginning MGVs alternating between Racine and Somers for 35 participants. All 35 participants successfully completed the training course and passed the exam, but because it was a fall class ending in December their volunteer commitment is not due until October 1 of 2014.

This past year we made a concerted and thorough effort to identify urban locations east of I-94 to address the needs of potential volunteers living in the cities of Racine and Kenosha. Master Gardener Volunteer Training in Racine and Kenosha Counties is done in partnership with Barb Larson, Horticulture Educator for UW-Extension in Kenosha County. We identified two accessible sites that met our criteria for conducting training, but unfortunately there is no public transportation available for both sites. The public bus system does not cross the county line, so although the Racine site was available by bus for Racine residents it was not available to Kenosha residents by bus, and vice versa. Addressing transportation challenges within the training program for some participants remains an obstacle.

b. Master Gardener Level 2 Training – distance education through YouTube videos and live webinar based question and answer, class taught on Fruits and Vegetables to 309 participants. This course is planned and facilitated through Mike Maddox, Director of the Wisconsin MGV program.

c. Supported MGVs on 20 community projects located in Racine County, summarized in the table below. Overall, the number of volunteers remained the same for each project, but the number of hours per volunteer dropped slightly from 2012. The total volunteer hours decreased by 13%. The number of Master Gardener Volunteers completing their recertification requirements for the state dropped from 160 to 126. Going forward in 2014 we have about 30 who will be attempting to recertify, and 35 new MGV interns from the fall training who will be completing their course requirements by fulfilling their 24 hour volunteer commitment.

MGV Project Name	Project Location	Vol Hrs	# Vols	Avg Hrs
Botany in the Classroom	Racine Unified Elementary Schools	667	31	21.5
Garden of Giving	Racine – Lakeside Curative Services	769	24	32.0
Gardens of DeKoven	Racine – DeKoven Center	526	18	29.1
Graham Public Library	Union Grove	60.5	10	6.1
Green Works	Union Grove, Racine	408	16	25.5
Harvest of Hope	Burlington – Burlington Garden Ctr	106	6	17.7

LCS Horticulture Therapy	Racine – Lakeside Curative Services	187	2	93.3
Pioneer Cabin Gardens	Burlington	122	6	20.3
Plant Health Advisors	Racine, W. Racine, Ives Grove, Burl.	822	23	35.7
The Teaching Garden	Racine County Food Bank	184	11	16.7
Real Racine Visitor's Ctr	Sturtevant	335	18	18.6
Racine Public Library	Racine	132	7	18.9
Racine Theatre Guild	Racine	63.5	5	12.7
Racine County Opp Center	Racine	159	7	22.7
Ridgewood Care	Racine	732	19	38.5
Shoop Park Gardens	Wind Point	83	7	11.9
Sturtevant Beautification	Sturtevant	198	10	19.8
Norway Gardens	Wind Lake	146	11	13.2
Urban Shakespeare Garden	Racine	157	5	31.3
Waterford Rain Garden	Waterford	98.5	13	7.6
	<b>Total Hours on These MGTV Projects</b>	<b>6002</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>23.82</b>
<b>Total Volunteer Hours for Racine County MGTVs</b>		<b>7121</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>56.5</b>
<b>Total Continuing Education Hours for Racine County MGTVs</b>		<b>2371</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>18.8</b>

2. **Green Works** training for adults with disabilities in the greenhouse and the outdoor landscaping and gardening component was offered in 2013. The Green Works curriculum was completed, and evaluation of the curriculum by outside agencies is being undertaken in early 2014. Two success stories were submitted by Meryl Strichartz, Horticulture Program Coordinator communicating the value and impact of this programming effort.

4. **Plant Health Care** - support and training of Plant Health Advisors, diagnostic assistance for homeowners and commercial horticulture businesses. Provided 2 in-depth update and training sessions for 10 Racine MGTV-PHAs, and hosted a state training for 80 MGTVs at Norway Town Hall. State workshops are conducted in partnership with Horticulture Educators in neighboring counties, and with UW-Extension specialists.

5. **Public Media** – I use an array of media for broad education of proper gardening techniques and “best landscape management” for homeowners through public speaking, publications and radio.

- a. I write a weekly column answering local gardening and environment questions for the Racine Journal Times, circulation 25,500. These articles are also accessible on line at <http://journaltimes.com/lifestyles/> The column heading is “The Root of it All”.
- b. I also wrote a quarterly garden article for PRIME publication in 2013, Southeastern Wisconsin’s magazine for active adults. This is a regionally distributed magazine to 23,000 households with a family member over age 55. <http://www.primethemagazine.com> This publication ceased production in December of 2013 due to lack of funding.
- c. I am a regular guest (4 times in 2013) on WPR Larry Meiller’s Garden Talk radio show on Fridays from 11 to 12:30, and repeated twice over the weekend. The radio show reaches approximately 100,000 listeners, and is also available online at: <http://wpr.org/gardentalk/>

**6. Green Industry** support through planning and facilitation of two regional continuing education programs. Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Short Course (129 participants locally, 500 regionally) is taught in February and organized by a team of educators from Sheboygan, Waukesha, Racine and Kenosha Counties. I also participate in the planning and facilitation of Plant Health Field Day (150 participants) in August. This is a long-running program coordinated by educators in Waukesha, Kenosha and Racine Counties in partnership with Boerner Botanical Gardens. Both programs continually receive positive feedback from attendees. In 2013 I also presented to the 100 professional landscapers at the Rain Garden Workshop.

**7. Emerald Ash Borer** communications and education. I continue to serve on the statewide committee to monitor and release communications about new and existing EAB infestations in the state.

**8. Public Presentations** – I continue to respond to local requests for educational presentations on the environment, interior plant care, and sustainable gardening practices. In 2013 I presented to 8 public groups for a total of 501 people. I also presented to the ANRE Conference participants on Community Gardening Publications and Resources, and to UW-Extension educators statewide via webinar on the community garden program in Racine County.

### **9. Success story on the Teaching Garden programs in 2013**

The Teaching Garden for Volunteer and Community Learning  
Patti Nagai, Racine County UW-Extension

#### Situation

Increasing interest in community gardening and growing fresh fruits and vegetables at home has been noted in county Extension offices nationwide. In Racine, two community gardens run by UW-Extension Master Gardener Volunteers are available for community service, but one was designed, built and maintained not just for food production, but for teaching and demonstration of sustainable gardening practices.

#### Response

The Teaching Garden is a Master Gardener Volunteer project led by Patti Nagai, Horticulture Educator for Racine County UW-Extension that was developed in partnership with Dan Taivalkoski, Director of the Racine County Food Bank in 2009. This garden provides an environment for all ages and abilities to learn about growing fruits, vegetables, and flowers using sustainable techniques. The location, and invaluable community partner, The Racine County Food Bank, provide the “living lab” for teaching about water quality, composting, the importance of pollinators and all things sustainable when it comes to gardening practices.

Volunteer run gardens depend on many people to be successful. Organization and publicity are key, as well



as a community that supports the garden through donations and time. In addition to the Master Gardener Volunteers, the occasional community volunteer and the regular Huber volunteers, many volunteer groups from local businesses, churches, schools and community centers helped make the garden successful. A total of 65 adults and 119 youth volunteered at The Teaching Garden in 2013. The garden is not visible from the street, but it is open to the public six days a week and is actively promoted through newspaper articles, websites and Facebook.

## Results

Nine classes were scheduled for the public and active volunteers throughout the growing season from mid-April through October. Topics included at the garden included "Planning for Planting-Scheduling Your Veggies", "Early Spring Vegetables", "Container Gardening with Edibles", "Plants or Seeds? Seeding and Transplanting Techniques", "Organic Methods and Materials", "A Look at Perennials –Asparagus, Herbs, Raspberries", "Planting for Fall Harvest", "Refreshing Container Gardens for Fall", "Vine Crop Comparisons", "Totally Terrific Tomatoes and Preservation", and "Closing up the Garden and Composting".

In addition, The Teaching Garden was used as the site for filming 6 educational videos which can be found on the People + Plants Community Garden website at <http://fyi.uwex.edu/peopleplants/>



## Evidence

The Teaching Garden is a great example of a volunteer project making a difference in the community by providing a location for Master Gardener and other community volunteers to learn about sustainable and organic gardening practices. Eighty-seven adults participated in the classes at the garden, and the response from attendees was positive for each class, scoring an average of 4.3 on a 5 point scale (1 Fair, "learned little" to 5 Excellent, "learned a lot".) One participant, Alice, said, "It is so great to get practical information I can use in my own garden." Another participant wrote, "After the last class I went home and at different times realized all the things that I had learned."

The Teaching Garden also provides between 3000 and 4000 pounds of fresh produce each year for distribution to families in need through the Racine County Food Bank, our community partner.

**External Relationships:** Share examples of your work in building productive relationships with collaborators, partners, elected officials, marketing and mass media.

1. **Racine County Food Bank** – I partner with Dan Taivalkoski, Director of the RCFB on community garden program from planning, planting, maintenance to teaching classes. I give tours, or arrange for a MGV to give tours, to local officials, board members and other groups in the community at the request of Taivalkoski. I also lead and teach community volunteer groups from SC Johnson, local and visiting church groups, youth groups, school groups, and other participants at the Teaching Garden.

2. **Lakeside Curative Services** – I partner with LCS on the Garden of Giving and the therapeutic horticulture program at LCS, including a segment of the Green Works training program we provide to participants. I also serve on the Board of Directors for LCS, and on the Facilities Committee.
3. **Shepherd's College** –I partner with Leslie Leith, Horticulture Instructor at the College on greenhouse activities for Green Works participants. GW Participants plant the large containers used for beautification in the village of Union Grove at local businesses under the direction of Leslie Leith.
4. **Southern Wisconsin Center** – I partner with Sue Frantz, Management Services Director, Randy Harrison, Craftworker Supervisor, and staff at Southern Wisconsin Center to assure that we have continued space for teaching the Green Works program and a running greenhouse for growing plants in winter and spring for the class.
5. **EAB Communications Team** – I partner with specialists from DATCP, APHIS and DNR to monitor and disseminate timely information on emerald ash borer infestations in Wisconsin to municipalities and the public. The committee also provides EAB educational materials to the public and to Extension county educators around the state. I am the representative from UW-Extension on this statewide committee.
6. **Root Pike Watershed Initiative Network** – I partner with Susan Greenfield, Director of Root Pike WIN and the Rain Garden Initiative Committee to plan and teach water conservation and preservation of water quality through the use of sustainable yard care and rain gardens. In 2013 we hosted and taught a Rain Garden Workshop for Landscapers at SCJ iMet Center in Sturtevant for 100 professional horticulturists.
7. **Racine County Publics Works and Parks** – I am responsive to questions, and assist when requested, with various aspects of county parks and property work. I work with Jim Metzger, landscape architect for the county and Julie Anderson, Director of Public Works, with respect to potential landscaping ideas and maintenance on county properties.

**Internal Relationships:** Describe your contributions in working with office colleagues to build a productive, respectful workplace, and your contributions to Extension program teams.

1. I am an active and supportive member of the **ANRE Horticulture Team**
2. Co-leader and active member of the **People+Plants Team**, funded through a USDA grant to Urban Horticulture for the development of educational resource materials to support community gardening efforts statewide. To date 5 A-series UW-Extension publications have been printed, 8 videos produced and 2 podcasts recorded. Six of those videos were written by me and produced at The Teaching Garden in 2013. All of these materials and new ones to be completed will be on the website: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/peopleplants/> UW-Extension publication A-3905-04, 'Raised Beds and Containers for Community Gardens', authored and photographed by me, was completed in 2013 and is currently in final design.

Two additional publications (authored by me) are in process, as well as a state-wide workshop series to support other educators and agents working with groups starting community gardens. This is in collaboration with Mike Maddox, Director of the Wisconsin Master Gardener Program, and Dr. Erin Silva, Outreach Specialist with UW-Extension.

3. Worked with Family and Community Educator Sarah Hawks on publications in the Community section of the Racine Journal Times.
4. Worked with Youth Development Educator Tracy Strother, and Racine Kenosha Nutrition Education Program coordinator Aimee Martinez on a youth gardening program at the Villa and Mead Streets Community Policing houses.
5. Serving a second year on the **Agriculture and Life Sciences Department Standard Rank and Promotion (SRP) Committee** as an "at-large" representative.
6. Completed my term as the **Vice-Chair for the Agriculture and Life Sciences Department** (Quad Counties, now East-Metro).

**Valuing Differences:** Describe how you are investing yourself in helping the organization achieve its goal of becoming more inclusive and diverse. Share examples of programs that reach diverse audiences and efforts recruiting a diverse workforce.

1. For the last 3 years we have offered Simultaneous interpretation in Spanish for the Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Short Course for professional horticulturists in the green industry. In 2013 the handouts and evaluation were translated into Spanish at the request of my co-facilitator for the program, Kenosha Horticulture Educator Barb Larson.
2. In order to provide Master Gardener Volunteer training to a more diverse audience, Barb Larson and I made considerable effort to contact and explore possible venues east of I-94. Our goal was to offer the 2013 MGV class at a more accessible location for those potential participants living in the cities of Racine and Kenosha. Unfortunately the transit system in the two counties is not unified, and there is not a possibility to maintain the two county approach to teaching and have the sites be available through the public bus systems.
3. The Green Works training program for adults with disabilities reaches an underserved audience of all races and ethnicities. This program has expanded to 3 facilities: greenhouse programming at Southern Wisconsin Center, therapeutic horticulture at Lakeside Curative Services, and urban farm and market at Kenosha Achievement Center. The Horticulture Program Coordinator, Meryl Strichartz, has very successfully moved this program forward to include a very detailed activities curriculum and a well-trained and happy group of Master Gardener Volunteers. Meryl has built an incredible relationship with Kenosha Achievement Center, which is now being supported by Barb Larson in Kenosha County UW-Extension since the grant funding for the Green Works Expansion project has ended.

4. The People+Plants team is planning a series of workshops on community gardening for the members of the Ho Chunk Nation in 2014 in collaboration with Bill Halfman, Agriculture Agent in Monroe County.

**Future Goals and Program Priorities:** Briefly state your goals and program priorities for the coming year. Share any additional resources that are needed to conduct programs effectively.

1. I have chosen to continue my temporary reduction of hours (80%) which has allowed me to spend more time with my children after school. In addition, because of the additional time off this year due to a family medical emergency, having Meryl in place to assist me when needed has helped tremendously. The reduced appointment overall has worked well; I have been able to keep up with my programming efforts and Meryl has been very productive with moving the Green Works program forward and helping with other duties such as website maintenance and volunteer communication. Having a part-time program coordinator who understands the Master Gardener program and the value of working with volunteers has become an integral part of programming success in Racine County. Meryl's skills, talents and passion for the programming has led to many successes this past year.
2. **Green Works** continues to be a program priority at the local level. Programs are ongoing at the greenhouse at Union Grove for several different target audiences. We plan on continuing the landscape and gardening program over the summer, and Barb Larson is leading the program at Kenosha Achievement Center. The curriculum is ready for peer-review and evaluation. A detailed evaluation of the GreenWorks program, MG Volunteers, past GreenWorks participants and the Green Works curriculum was designed in 2013 and will be sent out in 2014. In addition, Meryl Strichartz and I are exploring the possibility of incorporating a veterans program into GreenWorks.
3. **The Master Gardener Volunteer program** remains a priority. Training and education are in constant demand, and new training programs are being developed. In addition, support of the MGVs in their community projects is essential. Without the MG Volunteers I would not be able to accomplish program goals.  
Barb Larson and I began an evaluation process in 2013 for MGVs past and present to determine volunteer motivation and explore retention issues. This research is initially for Racine and Kenosha County MGVs, but Mike Maddox, Director of the Wisconsin Master Gardener Program, will implement the evaluation tool statewide once tested in Racine and Kenosha.
4. **Plant Health Advisor (PHA)** updates will be continued throughout the year on a regular basis. In addition, an informational and promotional program will be presented to the county employees to explain the MGV-PHA program and how it works in the county buildings. I will work with the PHAs on keeping displays and materials updated in the buildings.
5. **The community garden programs** in Racine will continue to require an educator and supporter for their success. I taught a series of public classes in 2013 and with a few modification in times and topics, will repeat that series in 2014. I would like to increase

attendance at those classes, so I am exploring more ways to market and promote these classes to reach a bigger audience.

6. **Portfolio** development for promotion to Professor within the Agriculture and Life Sciences Department.
7. Without work-life balance none of these goals can be met. I will continue to work on time management skills and utilize volunteers' talents as much as possible. My goal for 2014 is to focus on local needs first.

**Professional Development Needs:** Identify your specific professional development plans for the next year.

1. Training session(s) on use of technology (iPad, Google+, Time management/Schedule Applications, etc) to assist with programming efforts, evaluation and scheduling.
2. Photography training to assist me in my publications and training programs. It is increasingly important to have good quality, high-impact photographs that can be copyrighted for use in online trainings (webinars, YouTube) and UW-Extension publications.
3. Additional Access program training – ongoing support from the trainer we hired in 2013 to reformat the Master Gardener database.
4. Outlook program training – to more efficiently manage calendar and email functions.
5. Evaluation and assessment tools training – will work with evaluation specialists on MGV and Green Works evaluations in 2014.
6. Other training in therapeutic horticulture, professional writing, and volunteer management if available and funding found.

---

Signature of Extension Professional, Date

---

Signature of Department Head, Date