

Southeast WI Master Gardeners

Annual Accomplishment Report 2009

SEWMG has approximately 525 members, including the 135 who took general training in the spring. About 100 of the trainees completed the requirements for certification. A total of 362 are to be certified for 2010. In 2009 we volunteered 1,359 hours in youth education 12,583 hours in community education 7,482 hours in support service and participated in 12,375 hours in continuing education. Our association is the largest in the state of Wisconsin, with members primarily in Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties. We provide six educational newsletters per year both electronically and by mail to those who are not on the internet. Our website is available to the public and these newsletters are linked. In addition, we have six educational programs per year and four bus trips for our members.

Major Accomplishments or Projects:

1. *Updated Bylaws.* This year we had to implement our bylaws that were re-written in 2008. There was a major change to the organizational structure, especially with regards to finance. Committee structure and responsibilities were vastly improved as was the flow of information to our membership.
2. *Scholarship Program.* We designed a program to provide financial assistance at three different levels. One is for prospective MGs to pay for training. Another will provide scholarship money to the Horticulture Programs at Milwaukee Area Technical College and Waukesha Co. Technical College. And we will give scholarships to the Horticulture programs at UW-Madison and UW-Stout. Students from Waukesha and Milwaukee Counties will be given priority for these scholarships.
3. *Garden Support Committee.* Because management and support of 47 educational gardens is complicated, we developed this committee to provide staffing assistance, advice and counsel regarding management of the gardens, and assistance with obtaining labeling, signage, and equipment. Each garden will be visited annually to ensure that they are performing. Members (especially new members) will be matched with the various gardens according to interests and geography.
4. *Educational Programming.* We provided staffing for educational programs at Boerner Botanical Gardens, as well as maintaining a speakers bureau available to organizations throughout both counties. We staff an educational garden at State Fair and have a booth at the Milwaukee Co. Fair.
5. *Plant Sale.* Our plant sale is a very successful fundraiser at which we sold approximately 17,000 plants, most of which came from members' gardens. In addition to sales, we have added an educational component and a Plant Health Advisor booth for answering questions.
6. *Enabling Tools.* We received a large donation of "enabling" tools which have been a popular attraction at our Backyard Garden at State Fair and will be used in programs aimed at organizations of senior citizens and the disabled. In addition, some of these tools will be allocated to our educational gardens to be "test driven" by our members. This practical experience will be useful when advising visitors to our displays (such as State Fair) and at our programs.

Highlighted Project: The GROW Project

The GROW (Gardening Research Opportunity With...) project, which encourages urban residents (especially in low to moderate income neighborhoods) to grow vegetables in containers, continues to expand in both Waukesha and Milwaukee Counties with many more residents becoming included. The potted peppers and tomatoes are especially popular in the urban settings—becoming almost a competitive sport. The effect on the community is very positive, as participants learn more than just gardening — this program promotes self-sufficiency and strengthened sense of community.