

Southeast WI Master Gardeners

SEWMGA had 643 paid members of which 449 were certified for 2014. Our membership is primarily from Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties. There were 121 students in fall training and 440 members are certified for 2015.

In 2014 we volunteered	4,315	hours in youth education
	13,701	hours in community education
	7,898	hours in support service
and participated in	10,216	hours in continuing education



In the past year, SEWMGA members were provided with opportunities for 10 educational presentations, 3 educational trips/tours, and Level II training. A new weekly published volunteer opportunities chart was developed to ensure that all MGVs could match their personal availability schedules with approved volunteer work hours. In addition, a Volunteer Fair was held to introduce all members and trainees to all of our approved gardens and projects. Our hours reporting documents have been updated to an Excel spreadsheet to make reporting of hours more efficient for members. Members, who needed it, were provided with training sessions on the use of Excel.

Major Accomplishments or Projects:

1. The Invasive Species Eradication Project volunteers removed truckloads of buckthorn, garlic mustard, honeysuckle vine and overgrowth from 4 historical, public sites at Ten Chimneys and the North Point Light House over Lake Michigan, the Polish Alliance Center and NuGenesis grounds.
2. State Fair, Fall Harvest Festival, Art in Bloom, and the Home Show are venues where MGVs interacted with thousands of visitors this year. Booths and demonstration areas were staffed with MGVs for the entire duration of these events to distribute literature, answer questions and promote SEWMGA programs. The State Fair Model Backyard has examples of a native garden, shade garden, butterfly garden, rain garden, and cactus garden. In addition, there was a demonstration of composting techniques, use of rain barrels, and use of life-long gardening techniques and tools.
3. The annual SEWMGA Perennial Plant Sale is the primary source of funding for sponsored SEWMGA gardens, projects, grants, and scholarships. In 2014, 14,000 perennials were sold to about 800 customers, with the few left over donated to Habitat for Humanity. The sale process involves hundreds of MGVs and provides an opportunity to educate the public about the plants they are purchasing, as well as provide information on invasive species control, life-long gardening techniques, Plant Health Advisors, and promotion of the UW-Extension SEWMGV program.

Highlighted Project: Milwaukee County Zoo Butterfly Habitat

The plight of the monarch butterfly and decline in their numbers has been well publicized. In Milwaukee Co., a significant part of the Monarch Trail has been destroyed by construction. The Zoo Butterfly Habitat garden volunteers have been enthusiastically educating the public about this issue. The zoo has over a million visitors each year, many of them children. MGVs have developed and maintained the butterfly garden, disseminated plant and butterfly literature, and have been on hand for all major zoo events. During these events, MGVs demonstrated the rearing of butterflies, showed growth stages, and discussed and showed plants necessary for butterfly reproduction and feeding. The volunteers raised over 350 monarchs, 35 swallowtails, and a variety of other butterflies, many of which were released at these special event days to the delight and amazement of visitors. Volunteers gave onsite garden tours to garden clubs and have also presented at other venues, including State Fair and the Wehr Nature Center. In addition, they prepared butterfly garden plant kits for the 2014 perennial plant sale and discussed the plants and butterfly needs with customers during the sale. They work at the zoo garden weekly and are always thrilled to talk to any visitors (butterfly or people) while they work.