



2026 Master Gardener Conference Awards

September 10 to 11, 2026

**Illinois
Extension**

A huge thank you to the Master Gardener State Advisory Committee for spending many hours reviewing award applications.

The advisory committee is composed of two Master Gardeners and two Extension staff from five regions of the state.

Northeast Region

Sally Skoff, Master Gardener,
Will County

Margaret Burns-Westmeyer,
program coordinator,
Cook County

Northwest Region

Denise Maxwell, Master Gardener,
Rock Island County

Bruce Black, educator,
Carroll-Lee-Whiteside Unit

Alex Burbach, program
coordinator, Jo Daviess-
Stephenson-Winnebago Unit

West Central Region

Janine Donahue, Master
Gardener, Tazewell County

Andrew Holsinger, educator,
Christian-Jersey-Macoupin-
Montgomery Unit

Terri Casey, county director,
Logan-Menard-Sangamon Unit

East Central Region

Rosi Mcleese, Master Gardener,
Piatt County

Diana Glosser, Master Gardener,
Coles County

Beth Miglin, program coordinator,
DeWitt-Macon-Piatt Unit

Susan Sloop, county director,
Clark-Crawford-Edgar Unit

Southern Region

Lisa Dean, Master Gardener,
Monroe County

Rebecca Wisdom, Master Gardener,
Johnson County

Jennifer Warren, program
coordinator, Gallatin-Hamilton-
Hardin-Pope-Saline-White Unit

Kim Rohling, educator, Franklin-
Jackson-Perry-Randolph-
Williamson Unit

State

Candice Anderson, State Master
Gardener specialist

Travis Burke, assistant dean,
Agriculture/Agri-Business
program leader

2026 Outstanding Master Gardeners

Cynthia (Cindy) Badtke, DuPage County

Cindy has been a committed and core member of the DuPage County Master Gardeners for eight years. She has made a huge impact as a co-team leader at the DuPage County Care Center's "Secret Garden." She is an excellent leader of other Master Gardeners and provides high-quality educational programming to long-term-care residents through a horticultural therapy garden where she works with residents to plant, maintain, and harvest their plots. She is an optimistic, thoughtful, and collaborative leader. Her passion for horticultural therapy and gardening is clear, and she is truly an outstanding Master Gardener.

Chris Cheney, Lake County

Since transferring to Lake County from Washoe County, Nevada, where she volunteered as a Master Gardener since 1997, Chris has had a huge impact on the program. Having developed a relationship with the Deerfield Area Historical Society, Chris proposed a new project and became the project leader, helping the society restore and provide educational opportunities centered around the gardens at their Historic Village. In addition, Chris became co-lead of the Lake County Speakers Bureau in 2024. Chris's leadership and enthusiasm for educating others have been welcome additions to the program.

Pat Conner, Coles County

Pat Conner has been a dedicated and innovative member of the Master Gardener program since completing training in 2022. Serving as Education Committee chair since 2024, she has strengthened community outreach, coordinated educational programming, and empowered fellow Master Gardeners to grow as educators. Pat transformed the struggling shrub garden in the idea garden through extensive research, thoughtful plant selection, and hands-on restoration, creating a vibrant educational showcase for the community. Her passion for teaching extends to youth gardening education, public events, and creative, interactive learning experiences that engage gardeners of all ages.

Kim Darby, McHenry County

Kim has been an enthusiastic member of the McHenry County Master Gardeners for four years. As an intern, she took part in 75% of the volunteer opportunities offered and continues to participate in most of them. She has been one of the most reliable volunteers for the local help desk. She has taken on several speakers' bureau topics by involving a few other Master Gardeners and developing presentations they can deliver together. Her fellow Master Gardeners speak very highly of her and always enjoy working with her.

Nancy Drone, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Saline, Pope, and White Counties

Nancy has been involved in multiple Master Gardener projects over the past four years throughout Gallatin, Hardin, Pope, Saline, and White counties. She has been instrumental in educating local youth through programs at local libraries, schools, community events, and homeschool groups. She is always ready to help in any way she can and regularly brings new ideas to volunteer meetings. Nancy's desire to help her community is evident in her willingness to share her expertise and experiences.

Beth Farestad, McHenry County

Beth has been a pleasure to be around since she started her Master Gardener training. She is generous in her support. She has volunteered many times to step in and help project team leads struggling to find assistance. She is co-team leader at the Gannon Historical Garden, has assisted with all-day food service for the last two Gardenfest events, and has served as a lead docent at a home during the last two GardenWalks. She is also a mentor to a current intern and attends training sessions with her, as well as volunteering at events together when possible.

Laura Friday, McLean County

Laura is an innovative and supportive Master Gardener who has served in McLean County since 2017. Laura finds enjoyment in educating others through research at the Master Gardener help desk and community booths, developing historic garden documents at Sarah's Garden, and maintaining restoration efforts to continue for new Master Gardener volunteers. Her passion project includes leading the creation

of Sarah's Garden Digital Seed Guide and Specimen Box. Laura always has a positive outlook on connecting others through research and innovation.

Kelly Garrett, McLean County

Kelly joined the McLean County Master Gardener program in 2023 and, in just a few short years, has accomplished so much. Kelly seeks to provide education to the surrounding community by chairing the McLean County Speakers Series committee, displaying her passion for garden experimentation in her "Kitchen Scrap Gardening" presentation, leading the culinary quadrant of the Illinois State University Horticulture Center herb garden, and supporting the annual Home, Lawn, and Garden Day event in McLean County. Kelly is an includer and enjoys finding ways to connect volunteers and community members to horticulture topics and growing practices.

Rick Gawron, Kendall County

Rick has been a dedicated and dependable member of the Kendall County Master Gardeners for three years. He has contributed widely by leading the plant sale, founding and coordinating the Native Nerds group, editing the Weekly Weeder newsletter, and supporting the seed swap, greenhouse, and educational workshop projects. For the past two years, Rick has served as plant sale chairperson and Native Nerds chairperson, while also contributing as a unit Extension Council member and leading multiple educational initiatives, demonstrating strong organizational skills and innovation. Rick's passion for gardening extends beyond Master Gardener activities, as he actively shares his knowledge and skills through workshops and projects.

Jack Ingram, Cumberland County

Jack has been a dedicated and highly engaged member of the Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Moultrie and Shelby Counties Master Gardeners since completing training in 2023. He quickly emerged as a dependable leader, serving as Plant-A-Row Chair, Plant Sale Co-Chair, and Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Moultrie and Shelby Counties Master Gardener president. Jack has strengthened programming through leadership in greenhouse construction, educational outreach on innovative gardening techniques, and improvements to plant sales and committee involvement. His initiative, community connections,

and commitment to education have had a lasting impact on both the Master Gardener program and the public.

Anita Johnson, Winnebago County

Anita has made tremendous contributions to our community through her work as a Master Gardener. Her volunteer service has included serving as a docent at Anderson Japanese Gardens, assisting with orientation for new Master Gardeners, and contributing ideas and suggestions to staff as she identifies opportunities for improvement in the local program. She is also involved in the county Master Gardener Book Club, a longstanding local project. Through her work as a docent, she has shared her expertise with many other volunteers and members of the public. She is always willing to assist staff in ways that benefit all volunteers and has made it a point to become very familiar with the overall work of Extension in the county and the region.

Annie Link, Peoria County

Annie has been a dedicated and enthusiastic Master Gardener since completing her volunteer hours in 2023–24 and earning her Master Gardener certification in 2024. She has contributed widely by supporting the Morton Public Library Garden, the Western Avenue Greenway Project, the Peoria Riverfront Market, Repair Café planning, youth programs, festival outreach, and expanding the program's reach through social media. In 2025, Annie stepped into a greater leadership role at the Peoria Riverfront Market and has consistently led by example across all her volunteer projects, helping to organize events, coordinate volunteers, and strengthen community partnerships. Annie's passion for gardening and community connection shines through in every project she touches, as she continually seeks ways to uplift others and share Master Gardener knowledge with the broader public.

Gayle McCain, DuPage County

Gayle has been a dedicated and dependable member of the DuPage County Master Gardeners for six years. She has made a significant contribution to the Master Gardener program in her role as co-leader of the DuPage County Care Center Secret Garden. There, she manages the horticultural therapy gardening program, works one-on-one with long-term-care residents to help them tend to their gardens, and provides gardening education to residents. She is a positive, kind,

and collaborative leader. Her passion for gardening and helping others learn to grow is notable, and she is truly an outstanding Master Gardener.

Marcia Miller, Vermilion County

Marcia joined the Vermilion County Master Gardeners in 2024 and has hit the ground running. As a retired administrator and teacher, she poured her considerable skills and talents into the Vermilion County Master Gardener program. Marcia works alongside youth and adults in the garden, sharing her horticulture knowledge. She generously lends her professional skills to organizing meetings, writing agendas, and emailing volunteers reminders about meetings, workdays, and other key information. Marcia is a dedicated chair of the Douglas Discovery Garden and Hospitality Committee and also supports Garden Day, the VCMG plant sale, VCMG educational programs, and other VCMG projects. Marcia gives her best no matter how big or small the task. She always has a smile and a kind word for everyone she comes across along the way.

Amy Moore-McKee, Marshall-Putnam Counties

Amy has been a dedicated member of the Marshall-Putnam Master Gardeners for eight years. Over her years of service, Amy has contributed many hours to the Healthy Gardening Project that supplies plants and seeds to food pantries in Marshall and Putnam counties. She has also given her time to the Seeds to Harvest program, educating youth about how to grow and harvest their own food. Amy shares her passion for gardening through her beautiful cut-flower garden, which she uses to host flower-arranging workshops.

Mary Peifer, Peoria County

Mary is a dedicated Master Gardener volunteer. She received her Master Gardener certificate in 2024. She has helped at the Knoxville/War Memorial City Garden for two years, the Luthy Botanic Garden for six years, and many other gardens in the Peoria area. She has helped at our annual Peoria plant sale and is very involved in the Conservation at Home Program. Mary is a co-vice president on the board in Peoria County. She has been busy organizing the speakers and presenters for our monthly meetings. Mary is a passionate gardener. Having been raised on a farm and a 4-H member, she has always had a love for

gardening. When asked why she became a Master Gardener, her reply was, “I wanted to add beauty.” We believe Mary has accomplished that.

Annette Pletcher, South Suburban Cook County

For 13 years, Annette, a Cook South Suburban Master Gardener, has been educating “kids of all ages” on the importance of preserving our environment by engaging her community — including youth, special-needs audiences, and senior groups — through her passion for all things insect- and ecosystem-related. Her approach to showcasing the joy and wonder found in the natural world has improved Speakers Bureau programs and methods for reaching special-needs audiences and fostered an easygoing, approachable mentoring role with newer Master Gardeners. Annette’s enthusiasm and generosity of knowledge, highlighting the interconnectedness of everything from the smallest insect to the tallest tree, engage a wide array of participants at tabling events, Speakers Bureau presentations, and school garden activities.

David Regan, Edgar County

David has been a dedicated and dependable member of the Edgar County Master Gardeners for three years. David has contributed widely by bringing attention to local projects before the Paris City Council to garner community support, working with local schools to support youth interest in botany, and helping plan and conduct the annual April in Paris Master Gardener event. In 2025, David served as president of the Edgar County Master Gardeners, taking the initiative to connect the Master Gardener program with the community on various projects. David’s passion for gardening extends beyond Master Gardener activities, as he actively shares his knowledge through various community groups and events.

Melissa Skinner-Liberman, Sangamon County

Melissa has been a dedicated member of the Sangamon County Master Gardener program for five years. She has provided vermicomposting and 1860s heirloom gardening education to the public. In 2024 and 2025, Melissa co-chaired the Dean Home Heirloom Garden committee, coordinating volunteer schedules to provide education to visitors of the garden. Melissa is an enthusiastic volunteer who enjoys sharing her gardening knowledge with others.

Gloria Sun, Peoria County

Gloria has been an active member of Extension Master Gardeners in Fulton, Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell counties for three years. During this time, she has volunteered long hours in several projects across two counties and brought knowledge and skill into each experience. Gloria seeks ways to improve garden beds, to work cheerfully with other Master Gardeners, and to offer her talents no matter the task. She is willing to take instruction from others. Still, Gloria is also an independent thinker, able to see solutions and find ways to create new and beautiful results using innovative, highly creative methods.

Laurie Swanke, Tazewell County

Laurie has been a dedicated and dependable Master Gardener from Tazewell County since completing her training in 2021. She has contributed widely through her work at the Morton Giving Garden, Illinois Center College garden, St. Anne's Garden of Hope, youth programs, community events, and the Sterling School Native Plant Reading Garden. Laurie has demonstrated leadership by mentoring new interns, serving as unit secretary for three years, and sharing her extensive research and gardening knowledge to strengthen local projects. Laurie's passion for learning and teaching shines through in every volunteer effort, inspiring others while helping her community grow in both knowledge and connection.

Patricia Volkman, Lake County

Patty has been a dedicated and dependable Master Gardener volunteer since completing her training in 2018. Patty is a critical member of the Seed Library and Seed Expo teams, having helped turn the latter into an event that regularly engages nearly 2,000 individuals. A member of the Lake County Master Gardener Advisory Committee, Patty can also be found tending to the office's vermicomposting bins, which are used for regular educational events. Always willing to lend a hand, Patty can be found at the Extension office or project sites just about every day of the week, assisting fellow Master Gardeners and community members.

2026 Sustained Excellence Award Winners

Ellen Denler, Tazewell County

Ellen has been a dedicated and dependable Master Gardener from Tazewell County for 11 years and received the Outstanding Award earlier in her tenure. She has contributed widely by coordinating the Newcastle Church native garden project, serving as a Conservation at Home evaluator, mentoring Junior Master Gardeners, leading Native Plant Bingo, and delivering highly engaging ecological presentations through the Speakers Bureau. As a long-serving vice president, Ellen strengthened county programming by creating an inclusive planning committee and fostering a welcoming, collaborative culture across the organization. Since receiving the State Outstanding Award, she has expanded ecological teaching topics and led the transformation of the Newcastle garden into a sustainable, multicounty volunteer project.

Suzanne Eck, McHenry County

Suzanne has been a dedicated member of the McHenry County Master Gardeners for more than 20 years and received the Outstanding Award in 2018. She is an educator at heart and has been a key part of our Speakers Bureau group, giving presentations not only to local garden clubs but also to our intern classes over the years. Suzanne was a team leader at our demonstration garden for many years, as well as a team leader on our Recognition Banquet. She has run the plant sale and volunteers regularly at our off-site summer help desk. Her passion for horticulture is evident in everything she does.

Barb Flores, Winnebago County

Barb has continued to serve as an outstanding Master Gardener in Winnebago County program since receiving the Outstanding Master Gardener award in 2013. She has made a huge difference in the county by providing the leadership and support necessary for the Plant-A-Row Gardens at the Rock River Valley Pantry and restoring the Plant-A-Row program in Durand. She has also presented on vegetable gardening and provided mentorship to other Master Gardeners who have joined the project. She is a liaison with the pantry staff and, through her leadership, has made connections for Extension, including our SNAP (now nutrition) staff, thereby further expanding awareness in the area.

Cathy Hiser, Coles County

Cathy has been a dedicated member of the Coles County Master Gardeners for 10 years and received the State Outstanding Master Gardener Award in 2022. Since receiving the award, Cathy has continued to contribute through leadership of the plant sale and greenhouse committees, stewardship of the Keyhole Garden, community outreach, and support of educational and fundraising efforts.

As co-chair of the plant sale and greenhouse committees, she has provided leadership in volunteer coordination, greenhouse production, plant selection, and customer education. Since receiving the State Outstanding Award, Cathy has taken on new responsibilities by strengthening greenhouse production practices, mentoring volunteers, and supporting new educational programming, such as Botanical Evening in the Garden.

Cathy's collaborative leadership, creativity, and commitment to science-based horticulture continue to strengthen the Master Gardener program and its community impact.

Sue Jacobsen, McHenry County

Sue has been an inspirational member of the McHenry County Master Gardeners for 15 years and received the Outstanding Award in 2021. Sue was recently on our advisory board and is currently a co-team leader for our GardenWalk. In the fall of 2024, she worked with another volunteer to create a new volunteer opportunity at the Pioneer Center, a facility that works with developmentally disabled adults. She volunteers at our public events: Great Seed and Soil Event, Gardenfest, GardenWalk, and Farm Stroll, and volunteers at one of our food pantry gardens.



Laurie Martin, South Suburban Cook County

Laurie has been a valued part of the Cook South Master Gardeners for 12 years and received the Outstanding Award in 2019. Laurie's dedication to learning about native plants, soils, and native insects and animals has led to more impactful programming for fellow Master Gardeners and the public through Speakers Bureau presentations, youth programming showcasing live worms and insects, and sharing Extension resources at our Ask the Master Gardener help desk and information tables. Laurie is a kind and patient mentor, allowing new Master Gardeners to gain confidence in presenting to the public or even holding a giant cockroach! Laurie continues to improve existing Speakers Bureau offerings and create new programs to educate fellow Master Gardeners and the public.

Susan Walters, Fulton County

Susan became a Master Gardener in 2008, hit the ground running, and has remained an important part of the Master Gardener program ever since. As a Master Gardener, Susan has been involved with many important projects in Canton, such as being an active member of the Spoon River Garden Club, Gardeners' BIG Day, Veterans Memorial at Lakeland Park, First Christian Church gardens, the beautification project in Jones Park, garden walks, and being actively involved with the Canton Park District for 32 years.

Steve Wolf, Kendall County

Steve has been a dedicated and dependable member of the Kendall County Master Gardeners for over 10 years and received the Outstanding Award in 2016.

He has contributed widely by coordinating the help desk, mentoring new interns, and representing the program through radio and TV outreach and as a judge at the fair.

In his leadership roles, Steve organized volunteers, secured grants, revitalized community garden spaces, and strengthened outreach through educational programming and events.

Since receiving the State Outstanding Award, he has expanded his impact by establishing partnerships with local nurseries for consignment plant-sale inventory, launching a local Pollinator Partnership team, and increasing food-donation efforts through the Give Back Garden.

2026 Teamwork Award Winners

Thomas Middle School Garden Club – The Soil-Mates School Garden North Suburban Cook County

Kevin Allender

Shelley Plischke

Robert Bearman

Sandy Vliet

The Thomas Middle School Garden Club, known as The Soil-Mates, is a collaborative partnership among students, Illinois Extension Master Gardeners, school staff, and community supporters. Through grant funding, volunteer leadership, and student-driven design, the team transformed an 80-foot-by-30-foot school garden into an accessible outdoor learning space featuring vegetable production areas, a sensory garden, an herb garden, a desert garden, and an Americans with Disabilities garden.

The project engages more than 20 students annually, including those with diverse learning and physical abilities, and provides hands-on horticultural education, as well as opportunities for leadership, stewardship, and community engagement. The garden serves as a model for inclusive school gardening and demonstrates how Extension volunteers can create lasting educational impacts through sustained partnerships.

Hines VA Hospital Community Garden South Suburban Cook County

Paula Blunk

Mary Segal

Beth Piersialla

Mary Lou Tortorello

Christine Scholl

Valerie Wodzinski

In 2022, Cook South Master Gardeners and Extension educators helped Hines VA Hospital transform the large grassy field on the hospital campus into a productive community garden. Shortly thereafter, the garden expanded from 16 plots to 30 and from 14 fruit trees to 18. Veterans who live in on-site campus residences and hospital staff have the opportunity to participate in gardening to support their overall wellness by connecting with nature. As the garden season closed in 2025, 175 pounds of fresh produce were donated to Hines Food Pantry, which serves area veterans and the on-site veterans residential facility.

Westmont Public Library Giving Garden

DuPage County

Judilynn Bult

Sharon Rakowski

Marlene Kastle

Kirsten Schmidt

Pat Miller

Sue Van Dyke

It's said that "If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need." The team at the Westmont Public Library Giving Garden, planted right at the library's entrance, would agree. The garden is both a food donation garden and a focal point for gardening education. It has grown much in the past few years due to the volunteers' dedication to the site and to providing research-based education to library patrons. Volunteers at the library are known as the go-to for gardening information and have tripled their food donations in the past few years. Team members work exceptionally well together, as demonstrated by the gardens' recent success.

Idea Garden of Kane County

Kane County

Margaret Ann Haas

Robert Herrmann

Anne Herrmann

Jennifer Tonn

The team delivers impactful community education through engaging displays, outreach events, and hands-on programming supported by strong partnerships with local organizations. They expanded and enhanced the garden, doubling the cultivated space to serve educational and demonstration needs better. Their growth enabled them to mentor more than 20 interns and collaborate with SNAP-Ed to donate fresh produce to local food pantries. They also hosted an educational school visit and welcomed community partners, as well as university and Extension leadership, to strengthen collaboration. In addition, the team celebrated consecutive years of highly successful plant sales that continue to fund and elevate their community-focused work.

CARE Garden

Lake County

Deborah Barker

Bob Paul

Andy Brugger

Don Schwab

Joy Gajda

Amy Scovill

Jeffrey Hayes

Jack White

Founded in 2011, the CARE Garden serves as both a source of fresh produce for local food pantries and an educational tool for Master Gardener volunteers and community members. Over the last two years alone, Master Gardener-led volunteers have grown and donated over 30,000 pounds of produce for community members in need. CARE Garden leaders have helped educate fellow Master Gardeners, interns, and community members on various growing practices and techniques, embodying the mission of “Helping Others Learn to Grow.”

Willy’s Garden Week

Macon County

Toni Griffin

Karen Tappendorf

Angie Hollingsworth

Angie Wetzel

Carla Pohl

Sandi Williams

Willy’s Garden Week has been an impactful youth gardening program at the Decatur Public Library since its inception. In 2025, a new team of Master Gardeners took the lead in planning and delivering the program, enhancing its success. Through engaging, hands-on activities, participants explored the parts of plants, discovered how seeds travel and spread, made their own compost, and developed a greater appreciation for the role pollinators play in our environment. The program fostered curiosity, encouraged outdoor exploration, and helped cultivate a lifelong interest in gardening and nature.

Trips and Trainings

McHenry County

Chris English

Colleen Leonard

The Trips and Trainings team provides our volunteers and the public with year-round opportunities to deepen their horticultural knowledge across a wide range of topics. Colleen and Chris coordinate this team, which arranges anywhere from 10 to 20 speakers and field trips each year that meet the university's continuing education requirements and are both educational and enjoyable. These events are open to the general public, friends, and family members, not just volunteers.

Peoria Friendship House Community Garden

Peoria County

Kendra Belk

Mary Peifer

Jaime Dooley

Rosemarie Piper

Sister Anna Flanigan

Sarah Smith

The Peoria County Master Gardener team successfully reclaimed and rebuilt an urban youth garden plot consisting of 10 10x10 beds that had been abandoned for two years. Partnering with the Peoria Friendship House, the team developed a seed-to-seed curriculum that educates up to 200 youth annually (ages 5–14) in food production, drip irrigation, and nutrition. Demonstrating exceptional teamwork, the team is actively expanding the footprint to include a new pumpkin patch, 2 flower beds, and 2 new community beds. Through weekly workdays and flexible scheduling, the core team mobilized auxiliary Master Gardeners to turn this neglected lot into a permanent public showcase of agricultural excellence.

Morton Giving Garden

Tazewell County

Paulette Hoyle

Lynda Sharp-Lower

Micheline Koch

Karen Shelley

Cathy Lane

Laurie Swanke

Pamela Scott

Joyce Wassell

The Morton Giving Garden team, led by project leader Pam Scott, brings together 13 Master Gardeners, interns, and community volunteers to successfully relocate the long-standing Morton donation garden into a new, expanded site. Through coordinated planning, strong collaboration with the Morton Park District, and countless volunteer hours, the team rebuilt the garden from the ground up and created a more visible, educational, and productive community resource at what was formerly Ada's Acres, a memorial giving garden in conjunction with a local church. Their efforts included moving infrastructure, reestablishing perennial plantings, planting significantly larger crop areas, labeling beds for public education, and securing donated seeds and plants from local businesses. The team's shared commitment to growing fresh produce for the local food pantry and engaging the community has transformed the Morton Giving Garden into a thriving example of teamwork, service, and impact.

Douglas Discovery Garden

Vermilion County

Lisa Abdelghani	Carrie Freeland
Debbie Andrews-Bryant	Patsy Green
Larry Betout	Gary Miller
Cathy Bolser	Marcia Miller
Diana Carranza	Tom Miller
Terry Collier	Dan Scott
Stefanie Davis	Marge Prideaux
Julie Donnell	Joyce Rahn
Chris Fitzsimmons	Liz Welter

In 2026, Vermilion County Master Gardeners celebrated 20 years at Douglas Discovery Garden in Danville. Most gardens grow best with fresh ideas that often develop from new volunteers and partnerships. Residents who are not Master Gardeners often lend a fresh perspective as they have unique insight into the neighborhood. In addition, several key community members have stepped in to work alongside Master Gardeners, becoming instrumental in this project's success. Because the Douglas Discovery Garden is in a food desert, volunteers saw a

need to expand the amount of fresh produce being grown. They also saw the potential to create an outdoor classroom to teach residents how to grow fruits and vegetables in the garden.

Congratulations to the award winners!

On behalf of University of Illinois Extension, horticulture educators, and program staff, we say thank you to all Master Gardeners for your hard work and dedication to University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners program and for helping others learn to grow.

Thank you!

Dr. Matthew Vann

Associate dean and director of
Extension

Travis Burke

Assistant dean, Agriculture/Agri-
Business program leader

Bruce Black

Carroll/Lee/Whiteside Unit 4

Gemini Bhalsod

North Cook County Unit 6

Jennifer Fishburn

Logan/Menard/Sangamon Unit 16

Christopher Enroth

Henderson/Knox/McDonough/
Warren Unit 10

Kimberly Rohling

Franklin/Jackson/Perry/
Randolph/Williamson Unit 26

Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle

Fulton/Mason/Peoria/Tazewell
Unit 11

Christina Lueking

Bond/Clinton/Jefferson/Marion /
Washington Counties Unit 23

Brittnay Haag

Livingston/McLean/Woodford
Unit 12

Ken Johnson

Calhoun/Cass/Greene/Morgan/
Scott Unit 15

Andrew Holsinger

Christian/Jersey/Macoupin/
Montgomery Unit 18

Ryan Pankau

Champaign/Ford/Iroquois/
Vermilion Unit 13

Nancy Kreith

South Cook County Unit 6

Jack Schooley

North Cook County Unit 6

Emily Swihart

Henry/Mercer/Rock Island/Stark
Unit 7

Jamie Viebach

DuPage/Kane/Kendall Unit 5

Sarah Vogel

Macon/Dewitt/Piatt Unit 17

Nancy Kuhajda

Will/Kankakee/ Grundy Unit 9

Coles/Cumberland/Douglas/
Moultrie/Shelby Unit 19

Madison/Monroe/St. Clair Unit 22

One final thank you to the Jo Daviess, Stephenson, and Winnebago team of Master Gardeners and local staff who made this conference happen!

Notes:

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal dotted lines, typical of primary school writing paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the entire width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.



Illinois Extension

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