

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

April 2024



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Volunteer Spotlight: Master Gardener Jackie Trotter

Jackie Trotter embodies the spirit of the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener program. Her dedication to her community and her passion for learning has made her a valuable asset, not only to her fellow gardeners but also to countless residents who have benefited from her expertise.

Those who know Jackie rave about her willingness to help and her insatiable curiosity. "Jackie is always happy to lend a hand," says Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle, horticulture educator. "We are so fortunate to have her on our team as she helps others learn and grow."

Bob Streitmatter, Luthy Botanical Garden manager, echoes this sentiment, adding, "Jackie is dedicated, a pleasure to work with! She faithfully travels from Canton to Peoria every Wednesday to volunteer at Luthy Botanical Garden, and she's been doing this for over two decades."

Jackie's involvement in Master Gardener activities speaks volumes about her commitment. She has volunteered her time at gardens and plantings throughout the region, sharing her expertise in projects such as Jones Park and the Veterans' Memorial at Lakeland Park. But Jackie's impact goes beyond beautification. She's a gifted educator and planner, having served as an organizer of Gardeners' BIG Day, an annual gardening seminar hosted by Extension Master Gardeners.

"Jackie was one of the first to volunteer when Gardeners' BIG Day was held virtually in 2022, even though this meant mastering a new web-based video platform" explained Tara Heath, Extension program coordinator. "She inspires us all with her positive voice."

Jackie's dedication is further underscored by her impressive list of accolades. Since completing her Master Gardener training in 2000, Jackie received numerous awards, including Outstanding Master Gardener and Master Gardener Sustained Excellence. She has also been part of a team recognized for their exceptional teamwork.

In total, Jackie has dedicated over 3,000 hours of volunteer service to her community and has tirelessly pursued nearly 1,000 hours of continuing education in horticulture.

Jackie's enthusiasm for gardening is contagious. As she reflects, "The education and instruction I received through the Master Gardener program has given me valuable insights that I've been able to implement at First Presbyterian Church as well." She acknowledges the importance of lifelong learning, stating, "The Gardeners' BIG Day program...and events like this are a wonderful resource for finding answers" to the many questions that arise throughout a gardener's journey.



Photo by Anita Wilkinson | Illinois Extension

Jackie Trotter is a passionate and dedicated Extension Master Gardener. She has been a valuable volunteer for projects at Luthy Botanical Garden, Lakeland Park, and Jones Park as well as being on the planning committee for Gardeners' BIG Day.

Tara Heath

Horticulture
Program Coordinator
tsheath@illinois.edu