

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Extension Master Gardeners host plant sales to share gardening expertise and locally grown plants

The arrival of spring brings a renewed interest in gardening, but many first-time gardeners may be unsure where to start. University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners (EMG) from Fulton, Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell counties share their love and knowledge of horticulture by hosting plant sales in the community. Two annual plant sales are EMG Susan McCabe's St. Jude fundraiser sale in Pekin and Peoria EMG sale at Metro Centre in Peoria.

Susan leads a team of EMGs to hold this plant sale every spring in Pekin. This year's event had 2,000 plants available and raised over \$7,000 with all proceeds donated to St. Jude's Children Hospital and Midwest Food Bank. Prospective buyers were able to browse a large selection of plants labeled with growing requirements and also to ask advice from Extension Master Gardeners.

"We were able to answer a wide variety of gardening questions; everything from which plants grow in shade to why my tulips might not be coming back," explained Susan. "We also encouraged people to try new things and include some native plants to support pollinators."

Leftover plants were donated to a new native plants demonstration garden being installed at Fulton County Farm Bureau in Lewistown.

In addition to organizing the plant sale, Susan also maintains seven public gardens in Pekin. Joining Susan in the plant sale project are EMGs Jennifer Bass, Roberta Whipple, Margie Finn, Cathy Endress, Tracey Greenwood, and Fran Stroemer.

A Master Gardener plant sale is also hosted in Peoria every year at The Metro Centre. EMG Karla Kane reported a very large crew of volunteers who worked together to do everything from start seeds all the way through the process of cleaning up after the event.

"There were many stages to this project with lots of contributions. No matter how big or small they may seem they all make this project come together so seamlessly," Karla wrote. The weather, wide variety of plants, and wonderful people made the event a success.

Both plant sales aim to offer buyers plants that have successfully been grown locally, and the expert advice from Master Gardeners to encourage more gardening.



Local plant sales hosted by Extension Master Gardeners encourage more gardening by providing plants that have been successfully grown locally in conjunction with expert advice from Master Gardeners. This year plant sales were held in Pekin and Peoria. Pictured above is a sample of the 2,000 plants offered at the sale held in Pekin.

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