Meet the Speakers

**Pam Buttz**
A Master Gardener for 10 years, Pam enjoys finding ways to garden in all seasons and situations. She has a worm farm and uses earth boxes to keep her flowers and plants up close and personal. **Topics – Earth Boxes.**

**Marge Evans**
Marge is an avid naturalist, gardener and author who specializes in the flora and fauna of Macon County. She taught field biology at Richland Community College and has been a Master Gardener for nearly 25 years. **Topics – Know your Natives, Wildflowers.**

**Frank Grgurich**
To say Frank is passionate about gardening is an understatement. A Master Gardener for 15 years, his depth of knowledge on the topics he covers is astounding. **Topics – Know your Natives, Wildflowers.**

**Barb Hannon**
Barb loves flowers and devotes much time to create beautiful gardens in her yard. She has been a Master Gardener for five years and is an expert on using fall and summer bulbs in creative ways. **Topics – Bulbs for All Seasons.**

**Elizabeth Jeffery**
Elizabeth grew up in southern England, where everyone gardens and the rhododendron hedges grow to 30-feet high. She has extensive training in trees and other woody plants. **Topics – Spring Flowering Trees, Heirloom Seed Saving, Shade gardening, Identify & Control Invasive Plants in Illinois, Dogwoods, Native Shrubs.**

**Betty Moser**
A Master Gardener since 2001, Betty has gardened for more than 50 years. She focuses on herbs and flowers, winning many blue ribbons at the State Fair. **Topics – Herbs, Microgreens, Container Gardening, Seed Starting, Choosing and Displaying Vegetables for Blue Ribbons.**

**Rich Starshak**
Looking for a way to satisfy his desire to help people and his love of seeing things grow, Rich became a Master Gardener in 1995. As owner of The Garden Path, he has designed landscapes for 15 years. **Topics – Landscape Design Tips, Solve Landscape Design Problems, Create a Themed Garden.**

**Verlyn Rosenberger**
Verlyn is a retired school teacher and lifelong lover of learning and knowledge. She has been a Master Gardener for 21 years, and is also a member of the Audubon Society and the Decatur Garden Club. **Topics – Master Gardener Program.**

**Jan Sickbert**
Jan has been a Master Gardener for 14 years. She enjoys hummingbirds, butterflies, flowers and other gardeners. **Topics – Hummingbirds.**

**Richard Zerfowski**
Having worked in a factory for more than 40 years, Richard wanted to be outside. So in 2005 he became a Master Gardener. Since then, he initiated a variety of projects such as rain barrels, building tomato cages and the Tomato Taste panel, several of which have won the prestigious International Search for Excellence Award. **Topics – Secrets to Growing Great Tomatoes, Soil - It’s Where it All Starts.**

**Macon County Master Gardener Speakers Bureau**

The Macon County Master Gardener Speakers Bureau is a wonderful resource that provides quality horticultural information to the community on request. All speakers are Master Gardener volunteers who have completed 60 hours of training from University of Illinois Extension and have years of gardening experience. Master Gardeners regularly speak to garden clubs, schools, businesses, churches, neighborhood groups and civic organizations on a variety of topics. Presentations are a minimum of 20 minutes long, our hands-on programs take longer, and topics can be modified to fill longer time periods. There is no cost, except when noted for a workshop’s cost of materials, however, we can accept honoraria.

The Master Gardeners are happy to present the following topics to community groups in the area. If you have a need for a specific topic that is not listed, please let us know and we will try to accommodate your request.

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**Master Gardener Program**
Get the inside scoop of what it takes to become a Master Gardener, and get an overview of the learning gardens and projects they are involved with.

**Flowering Plants**
Bulbs for All Seasons
Tubers, rhizomes, corms and tuberous bulbs…what are they? Learn about the origin and history of this special group of plants and some versatile, unique uses for them in your garden.

**Wildflowers**
Take a virtual tour of the spectacular sometime elusive plants growing native all around us. Be inspired to take a walking excursion with a camera to locate these woodland and prairie plants with names like Lady Slipper, Blue-Eyed Mary and White Trout Lilly!

**Landscaping**
Hostas
Did you know there are 9,000 varieties of hostas? Learn how to raise, propagate and grow this diverse group of plants and ideas for incorporating them into your landscape.

**Landscape Design Tips**
Get an overview of basic landscaping principles to apply in your yard; including defining spaces, visual continuity, focal points and interest.

**Solve Landscape Design Problems**
What about those large, small, quirky areas around your house and in yard? Discover some no-fail tips to move from humdrum to WOW!
Start with Seed

Heirloom Seed Saving
Heirloom flowers and vegetables not only come with memories of your grandmother, but these beauties can also be saved year to year, ready to pass on to your own grandchildren. Come hear what makes them special and how to store the seeds safely year to year.

Seed Starting
Learn tips and methods for starting seeds indoors. There are many reasons to do it yourself and it’s not hard when you know how!

Soils & Fertilizers

Soil – It’s Where it All Starts
Find the secrets to improving the soil in your garden. You will learn how and why to take a soil test, what to add to the soil to make tilling, planting and weeding easier and many other bits of useful information for any garden enthusiast.

Composting
What are the benefits of composting, and how do you do it? Learn how to make “black gold” and why!

Theme Gardens

Create a Themed Garden
What purpose does your garden have? You will learn ways to define your space to elicit whiny, serenity, sensory delight and other themes.

Shade Gardening
Many garden plants thrive in dappled or part shade. Use variegated leaves or white flowers to bring those quiet corners to life. Learn the sure-fire varieties that bring the shade garden to life.

Container Gardening
Container gardens are the not just for petunias. Explore versatile way to add pop and interest to any location using the filler, spiller and thriller concept and color and plant choices.

Hummingbirds
Did you know a hummingbird will visit an average of 1,000 flowers a day for nectar? Learn everything you ever wanted to know about hummingbirds and more; including attracting these “jewels” to your garden!

Photo courtesy of the Herald & Review

Trees & Shrubs

Dogwoods
Many people know and love the white flowering dogwood, which is native to the East Coast even though the botanical name is Cornus Florida. But did you know there are earlier and later-blooming members of the genus Cornus? There are also new dogwood hybrid trees and shrubs, offering year-round interest.

Know your Natives
That spindly little tree might be a native dogwood, a wild viburnum or rare Hop Hornbeam, all choice and beneficial Illinois native plants – or it could be the dreadfully invasive bush honeysuckle. Here’s your chance to become familiar with that "jungle" out there.

Identify & Control Invasive Plants in Illinois
Invasive plants are not from our area, but grow so aggressively that they can out-compete native species. Knowing how to identify invasive species can help maintain diversity in your yard, local parks and natural places. Learn how to spot some of the worst offenders and the recommended removal methods.

Native Shrubs
Native shrubs support area birds, butterflies and other wildlife. This presentation will highlight choosing and growing garden worthy Midwestern natives and their related cultivated cousins that support local ecosystems.

Spring Flowering Trees
Flowering trees are some of the first and best signs that spring has arrived. See examples and characteristics on favorite or overlooked varieties of spring flowering trees to help you choose the best one for your yard.

Vegetables

Basic Vegetable Gardening
From site selection and soil preparation to care of a crop from seedling to harvest, this class is great for beginners or experienced gardener alike. The speaker will share effective and proven ways to increase your yield as well as your gardening satisfaction!

Farmers Market
Plan, plant and sell for a profit. Learn how to choose the best plant varieties for customer need and the best techniques for high yield.

Choosing Vegetables for Blue Ribbon Quality
With 30 years of experience to share, this presenter will discuss seed selections, planting and growing strategies as well as harvest tips designed for beautiful and uniform vegetable and herbs to showcase.

Displaying Vegetables for Blue Ribbons
There are set criteria for displaying your vegetables and herbs to win ribbons. Learn the techniques and tips to capture the best attention. These methods can also be used for making fantastic centerpieces.

For more information, contact the Master Gardener Coordinator at 217.877.6042.