Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who build and enhance their community through gardening.

In 2018, 402 people participated in the approximately 60 hours of training throughout Illinois, including 78 in the new self-paced online Master Gardener training course launched this year. Of the 102 counties in Illinois 76 have MG programs. Cook County has three programs plus a very active program at Chicago Botanic Gardens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer Hour Categories</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gardens</td>
<td>101,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hort Hotlines</td>
<td>29,509</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>18,357</td>
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<tr>
<td>Therapeutic Gardening</td>
<td>6,731</td>
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<td>Speakers Bureau</td>
<td>3,975</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Gardening</td>
<td>2,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin/Tech Support</td>
<td>20,332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Volunteer Statistics

- 2,622 Volunteers
- 66,616+ Contacts
- 183,086 Service Hours
- 36,186 Continued Education Hours
- $5.7 million* Value to Communities

* $5.705,462 according to Independent Sector study
Nineteen MG Projects Receive Mini Grants
Projects representing Boone, Cook, DeKalb, Johnson, Lake, Madison, Perry, Randolph, Rock Island, and Will counties received funds raised through silent auction during the MG State Conference to support ongoing MG efforts in 2018.

The 2018 Mini-Grant program also brought an exciting new collaboration to impact hunger in Illinois. Through the generous support of the Illinois 4-H Foundation, counties were also able to receive funding for projects that partnered Master Gardeners with 4-H youth. Bond, Kane, Kendall, Lee, Macoupin, Marion, North Cook, St. Clair, and Washington counties were all able to receive funds to help forge connections between Master Gardeners and youth to work together to combat hunger locally by expanding healthy food access.

An example of the powerful projects is the Mon-Arc Garden in Rock Island County.

### Project Goals
Using education and gardening for a therapeutic benefit to challenge and strengthen individuals with development and other disabilities.

### Partnerships
The Arc of the Quad Cities is an independent, non-profit organization that promotes living and working in partnership with the community to support individuals with developmental and other disabilities, through a variety of support services.

### Audience
46 adult clients with varying degrees of disabilities attend MG led classes and garden with the volunteers.

### The Garden
Raised beds, a vertical garden and several container units in order to accommodate all persons with various handicaps.

### Education
Monthly classes led by the Master Gardeners utilizing education and gardening for a therapeutic benefit to challenge and strengthen the clients.
Award Winning People and Projects
During the 2018 Illinois State MG Conference, 297 Master Gardeners and staff gathered together in Springfield, IL to network together and recognize Master Gardener achievements.

Attendees learned about Renovating a Home Landscape from Greg Pierceall, Professor Emeritus at Purdue University, enjoyed a bit of botanical humor from Chris Benda the Illinois Botanizer, and Luscious Landscape Edibles from Dr. Bill Sullivan, Carol Reese, Ornamental Horticulture Specialist, University of Tennessee Extension.

Livingston County Youth Enrichment Lessons
Master Gardeners provided horticulture enrichment lessons to 2nd and 5th-grade classroom youth in Livingston County. They worked with Extension staff to set learning objectives for each lesson, designed the curriculum for each age level, and trained fellow Master Gardeners on teaching the lessons.

They created grab and go kits that include: Pollination, Seeds/Germination, Insects, Web of Life, Plant Adaptations, in order to save time and resources.

Ottawa Butterfly Garden - Waystation
Master Gardeners in LaSalle county worked with the City of Ottawa to create a butterfly garden to raise awareness of butterfly preservation. They created information to educate the public on the needs of butterflies throughout their life cycle, images for identification of common Illinois caterpillars and butterflies, and a list of plants that should be used.

Ingalls Hospital Rooftop Donation Garden
MGs taught Ingalls Hospital dietetic interns how to grow their own vegetables so they in turn can teach the clients they work with to grow their own vegetables to support a healthy diet. They grow and donated fresh nutritious produce to food pantries in local food-desert communities and educated youth from Restoration Ministries area outreach programs how food is grown.
Harrison Bruce Historical Garden
MGs worked together with the Harrison-Bruce Foundation to establish gardens designed to enhance the historical interpretation at this historical site. They designed the gardens to reflect an 1818 Illinois settler’s gardens utilizing heirloom varieties and educated the public on historical gardening through a variety of training sessions, garden tours, signage, and reenactments at the site.

Sixteen MG Projects Receive Funding to Grow More Food
The Growing Illinois Food Access Allocation (GIFAA) program is an SNAP-Ed funded initiative that partners Master Gardeners, SNAP-Ed educators, and food pantries to increase access to fresh produce for low resource populations. Project goals include increasing food availability through expanded garden capacity, increasing food utilization through pantry-based education and environmental changes; and expanding community capacity through education and through the development of partnerships like these.

In 2018, gardens at the 16 sites donated 8,022 pounds of produce valued at $11,373 to 18 food pantries serving over 14,000 people.

Decatur Correctional Center Gardens
Master Gardeners and local Extension staff provided education through the use of the Master Gardener training course to educate inmates at DCC on all things gardening.

The facility has a vegetable garden and greenhouse located at the Decatur Correctional Center for Women, which is a minimum-security prison located in Decatur, IL.

Vegetables are started by seed in the greenhouse, and grown outdoors by the women. In 2017, the gardens produced approximately 400 pounds of food, which at its current size, was not enough to feed the 600 inmates at the facility. Thanks to GIFAA funds, the garden was able to be expanded in 2018 and the produce is now donated to the Decatur Salvation Army’s food pantry each week.
How the Master Gardener Program Addresses Illinois Issues

- Therapeutic gardens
- Demonstration gardens
- Teaching gardens
- Building relationships between volunteers and their communities

Developing Healthy Lifestyles

- Horticulture hotlines
- Pollinator programs
- Integrated pest management programs and training
- Urban forestry

Protecting and Appreciating the Environment

- Food donation gardens
- Home vegetable gardening programs

Growing and Accessing Food to Prevent Hunger

- School Gardens
- 4-H Special Interest Clubs
- Library Gardens

Positive Youth Development

The Illinois Master Gardener Team

- Master Gardeners: 2,622 active members
- College of ACES: Dean Kim Kidwell and state specialists
- Office of Extension and Outreach: Associate Dean & Director, Dr. Shelly Nickols-Richardson
- Program Leader – Assistant Dean, Dr. Suzanne Bissonnette sbissonn@illinois.edu
- State MG Coordinator – Sandra L. Mason slmason@illinois.edu
- Interim Coordinator- Candice Hart mille116@illinois.edu
- Horticulture and Local Foods Small Farms Educators throughout the state: 26
- County Directors, Extension program coordinators and support staff: ≥ 60
- State MG advisory committee: 16 members including MGs and Extension staff

University of Illinois ~ U.S. Department of Agriculture ~ Local Extension Councils Cooperating

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