

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER
& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Ian Goslin

Horticulture
Program Coordinatorianmg@illinois.edu

The Keep Peoria Beautiful Award received by a team of Master Gardeners from University of Illinois Extension serving Fulton, Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell Counties recognizes the community impact and teaching mission of Extension's Master Gardener program as hundreds of residents benefit from their expertise.

Extension Master Gardeners receive *Keep Peoria Beautiful* Award for project and education at St. Jude Church and School

Highly trained Master Gardeners from University of Illinois Extension serving Fulton, Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell counties enhance local communities and bring horticultural awareness and knowledge to hundreds of area residents. In recognition of this impact, a team of Extension Master Gardeners, and other volunteers, at St. Jude Parish Catholic Church and School received an award from *Keep Peoria Beautiful*, the local affiliate of the national *Keep America Beautiful* organization.

The team has been led by Extension Master Gardener (EMG) Rosemary Weber for ten years. They oversee extensive flower beds, tree stands, and a pollinator garden that grace the large building complex and parking areas on this 20-acre property on Peoria's far north side. They also manage the gardens attached to the church's rectory and convent. The EMG team has achieved a remarkable level of horticultural integration and consistency that is squarely at home in its Central Illinois suburban setting.

Since hundreds of students, families, visitors, parishioners, and staff move through the site daily, the team is highly attentive to the educational aspect of their work, including the need to promote safety and sustainability. They demonstrate the value of native species; interacting sustainably with the local environment; attracting pollinators; sound plant selection, placement, and care; and the therapeutic value of horticulture in a multi-generational, multi-needs venue.

School teachers make use of the landscape and particular plant features, and the EMGs are constantly sought out by parishioners and community members for gardening advice, especially during their weekly workday. The site takes on the feel of a living laboratory and botanical garden where EMGs can demonstrate very specific techniques as well as larger-scale approaches to gardening.

Parish clergy and the school leadership and staff have been deeply appreciative of the EMGs' work, providing funding and support. Father Patrick Henehan, told Extension he "completely trusts the team" in its recommendations, commenting that their work has been of tremendous value to the parish and beyond.

The St. Jude's complex sits comfortably among several spacious housing developments and commercial spaces. Because of the open feel of the grounds and

its highly visible corner location, the gardens and landscaping enrich not only the parish itself but also the local community through its beauty, its inspiration, and its active demonstration and teaching of gardening excellence.



Photo: Award-winning Illinois Extension Master Gardeners hold award plaque: (from left) Joan Houser, Peggy Shane, John Machens, Rosemary Weber, and Donna Koch, with Extension Horticulture Coordinator Ian Goslin in back row (right).

University of Illinois—US Dept. of Agriculture—Local Extension Councils Cooperating University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture by the Director, Cooperative Extension Service, and University of Illinois.