EXTENSION SNAPSHOT
Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell

ILLINOIS Extension

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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Local Master Gardeners Honored with State Awards

Volunteers of University of Illinois Extension's Master Gardener program were recognized at a virtual awards ceremony October 2. The annual awards ceremony recognizes the work of the 2,700 volunteers who provide horticulture-related assistance to their communities.

Locally, eight individuals were honored in addition to one team award that includes seven Extension Master Gardeners (EMG) plus two Extension Master Naturalists. Honored with the Outstanding State Master Gardener award were Kathy Baker of Green Valley, Janine Donahue of Morton, Christine Grafelman of Hanna City, Randy Huber of Edwards, Cathy Lane of East Peoria, Sue Walters of Canton, and Trudy Yazujian of Washington. Kathleen McLaughlin of Mapleton was recognized with the Sustained Excellence Award.

A team of Master Gardeners and Naturalists were honored with a Teamwork Award for their project at Peoria County Juvenile Detention Center. That team includes May Bach of Hanna City, Julie Dantone of Peoria, Ellen Lorentz of Morton, Lynn Moon of Trivoli, Karen Pasko of London Mills, Karl Stach of Hanna City, Anthony Tiraboschi of Peoria, Laura Bradshaw of East Peoria and Denise Madigan of Chillicothe.

In 2020, 29 volunteers across the state received the Outstanding State Award. This award honors volunteers with an exemplary breadth and depth of involvement in the program. Only 1% to 2% of active Master Gardeners are recognized annually.

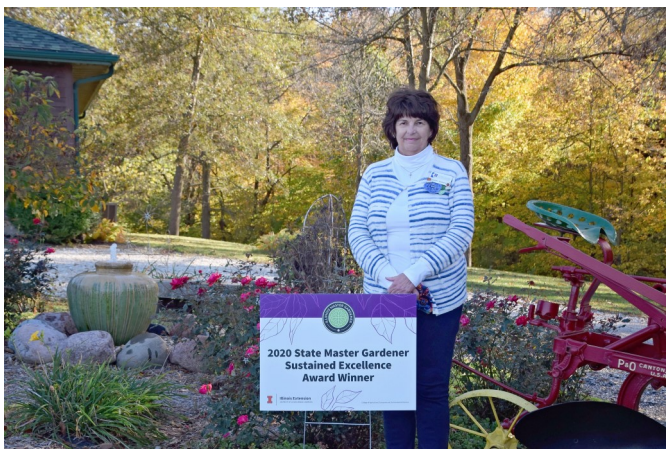
“We are so honored to have had so many of our local Master Gardeners recognized at the state level,” mentioned Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle, Extension horticulture educator serving Fulton, Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell counties. “The work they do locally makes a positive impact on our communities and citizens but also inspires volunteers throughout the state to start similar projects in their areas.”

The Sustained Excellence Award recognized 11 previous Outstanding State Award winners in 2020 for their continued dedication to the program. The winners displayed development in their Master Gardener careers taking on new responsibilities and initiatives.

Kathleen McLaughin, EMG since 2016, earned the Outstanding MG award in 2018 and now was honored with the Sustainable Excellence award.

The Peoria County Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) project was one of nine projects recognized with the Teamwork Award.

The JDC project includes a raised bed garden and educational classes for the residents. In addition to hands-on work in the garden, the volunteers teach them both horticulture and natural resource lessons. A video featuring the work happening at the JDC garden can be seen at go.illinois.edu/JDCgarden



Sue Walters of Canton was one of 15 local Extension Master Gardeners who was honored with an Illinois Master Gardener award. Yard signs were delivered to award winners following the virtual awards ceremony.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Master Gardener program may reach out using the Become a Master Gardener page at extension.illinois.edu/mg or by emailing Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle at nflower2@illinois.edu.

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