

# EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

April 2021



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## Extension Master Gardeners Educate the Community about Native Plants at Morton Public Library

Education and beauty go hand-in-hand with the new native plant landscape project at [Morton Public Library](#). [University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners](#) in the Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit worked to beautify the landscaping at the library while educating the patrons about the benefits of native plants. Efforts included the addition of native plant species to the existing landscape beds as well as information posted inside the building on native landscaping and pollinators.

Extension Master Gardener (EMG) Janine Donahue leads the project. "It was my goal to add native plants to the bed that lies between the parking lot and the street and educate the community about native plants," explained Janine.

Some of the education Donahue and her team provided includes the facts that native plant species support healthy ecosystems in land and water and reduce the need for inputs. Their benefits include:

- Serving as essential food sources for bees and other pollinators
- Reducing the need for pesticides and fertilizer
- Reducing stormwater runoff and soil erosion
- Outcompeting weeds and harmful invasive plant species
- Adding color and natural beauty to the landscape

Janine created an educational display about native plants and other horticulture topics. To add to the education, Master Gardeners worked with library staff to purchase new books about native plants: *Bringing Nature Home* by Doug Tallamy, *Gardening with Native Plants in the Upper Midwest* by Judy Nauseef, and *Pollinators of Native Plants* by Heather Holm.

"We enjoy our partnership with the Master Gardeners," commented Alissa Williams, Morton Public Library District Director. "We are all about connecting people through educational opportunities and we appreciate the assistance and expertise the Master Gardeners provide."

"Patrons of the library are also very appreciative of our work and thank us if we are working as they walk by," commented Janine.

Janine was recognized as a "State Outstanding Master Gardener" in 2020, an honor only bestowed on 1 - 2% of active Master Gardeners in the state. Joining her in volunteering at Morton Public Library are Master Gardeners Donna Cothrell, Annette Peugh, and Linda Rinaldi.

Additional information about beneficial horticulture practices and the Extension Master Gardener program can be found by contacting your local Extension office or visiting us online at [extension.illinois.edu/fmpt](https://extension.illinois.edu/fmpt).



*Extension Master Gardeners planted native species in the landscape beds at Morton Public Library. The plantings, as well as an educational display and new publications inside the building, showcase the benefits of using native plants in home landscapes. Pictured left to right are library volunteer Mary Burt, and Master Gardeners Donna Cothrell, Linda Rinaldi, Annette Peugh, and Janine Donahue.*

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