

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

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Extension Master Gardeners give to the Morton Giving Garden so that the garden can give to others

How many people does it take to grow 2,500 pounds of vegetables in one season? In the case of the Morton Giving Garden, it takes the whole community.

University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners (EMG) from Tazewell County created the Morton Giving Garden in 2010 to grow and donate fresh produce to local food pantries. The longevity and success of the garden is thanks to the collaboration with several local organizations.

The garden is located on land provided by the [Morton Park District](#) on Veterans Road, near Westwood Park. The park district also installed a water source near the garden for irrigation purposes.

"Support from the park district has been key," explained EMG and project leader Pam Scott.

A wide variety of vegetables are grown in the garden, including cabbage, green beans, tomatoes, lettuce, and carrots. Recent crop additions include lemon cucumbers, pinto beans, and garlic, which has shown to be very popular," Pam explained. "We have averaged over 2,500 pounds of produce donated per year over the last five years."

The produce is donated to local food pantries, including [We Care of Morton](#) and [Community Harvest](#) out of Trinity Church in Morton. The garden has also recently been registered with the [Tazewell County Health Department's Grow a Row](#) program, which connects garden surplus with food pantries in need.

"The Morton Giving Garden, which was awarded a State Master Gardener Teamwork award in 2013, is an excellent example of the many worthwhile projects our Extension Master Gardeners are leading in their communities," commented Tara Heath, horticulture program coordinator. "It's especially gratifying to see how partnering with local organizations and businesses can extend the reach further into the community."

Support for the garden comes from many places. [Ackerman Farms](#) supplies straw for mulch and pallets for raised beds. To protect the crops from deer, [Hohulin Fence](#) donated a chain-link fence.

Funding for wheelbarrows and soaker hoses was provided by the [Community Garden Network](#), a partnership of individual food donation gardens that collaborate and support each other in Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford counties and surrounding areas.

Other EMGs who join Pam at the Morton Giving Garden are Cathy Lane, Carol Cihla, Michelene Koch, Karen Shelley, Trudy Yazujian, Lynda Sharp-Lower, Donna Cothrell, and Paulette Hoyle. You can enjoy more photos from a recent harvest night at go.illinois.edu/MortonGarden.



Photo by Anita Wilkinson | Illinois Extension

The Morton Giving Garden is a food donation garden created by Extension Master Gardeners and supported by local organizations in Morton. EMG Donna Cothrell harvested lemon cucumbers for one of the local food pantries.

Tara Heath

Horticulture
Program Coordinator
tsheath@illinois.edu