

# EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

## Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

March 2021



**Illinois Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## Pollinator Partnership Honors Extension Master Naturalists

The University of Illinois Extension Master Naturalists of Fulton, Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell counties were honored in January 2021 by [Pollinator Partnership](#) for [Project Wingspan](#) as the Most Engaged Volunteers in 2020. The Extension Master Naturalists (EMN) logged 550 volunteer hours from July through October helping with seed cleaning and collection at [Mason State Tree Nursery](#), which serves as the project hub.

“No other group in Illinois for Project Wingspan with Pollinator Partnership, participated even half of that,” exclaimed Holly Frainer, Pollinator Partnership State Coordinator. “I am VERY fortunate to know this group! Everyone is considered a friend here and we look forward to working together!”

Once volunteer efforts resumed in July, the facility space allowed for plenty of room for volunteers to work safely, and the outdoor work was a perfect way for them to boost their immune systems with plenty of sunshine (Vitamin D) and fresh air. The work that happens in Mason County is contributing to conservation efforts across the 9-state Project Wingspan area.

“What has impressed me the most while volunteering at the Mason State Tree Nursery is the seed cleaning process,” commented Extension Master Naturalist Cindy Intravato. “Once the seed is harvested and arrives at the nursery, it goes through many steps and many machines in the cleaning process. But in the end nearly all of it requires some hand screening to arrive at the finished product.

“One day I spent over 5 hours cleaning Black-eyed Susan seeds to end up with a bag of pure seed that weighed about 7 oz. Of course, I am just a rookie, but it gave me a new appreciation for the cost of seed packets.”

In addition to Cindy, Jane Frazier, Roberta Clifton, Bill Bradley, Marianne Pilkington, Sandy Pomazal, and Kathy Spath are EMNs who were part of the team of volunteers honored for their outstanding volunteer efforts at this project.

To learn more about Pollinator Partnership Project Wingspan and how you can get involved locally visit [www.pollinator.org/wingspan](http://www.pollinator.org/wingspan).



Photo by Holly Frainer | Pollinator Partnership

*Extension Master Naturalist Cindy Intravato proudly displays her bag of Black-eyed Susan seeds. The tedious multi-step seed cleaning process took five hours to complete. The work was conducted at Mason State Tree Nursery as part of the Pollinator Partnership. Cindy is part of the EMN team recognized for their outstanding volunteer efforts.*

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