

## Master Gardeners of the Ozarks – 2021 Report

### Master Gardener Total Impact

For 2021, the Master Gardeners of the Ozarks fulfilled their commitment to take on high-impact and ambitious projects. A total of 4,128 hours were reported in 2021 by sixty-seven master gardeners who served the entire year and reported. This was a 16 percent increase in hours submitted compared to 2020. The first-year Master Gardeners are required to provide 30 hours of service and seasoned master gardeners are only required to provide 20 hours. This year the master gardeners who submitted hours each averaged 61 hours of service! According to the latest figures from the Independent Sector organization, the hourly wage value for U.S. volunteer hours currently is \$28.54. If you put a value on the education and service hours provided to the community, the amount totals almost \$118,000 worth of volunteer time! Continuing education is an important part of volunteer service. The master gardeners reported 903 hours of continued education this year. This averages to 13 hours per person. They are expected to submit a minimum of 6 hours of continuing education each year.

### Membership, Organization and Structure

As of year-end, there were 116 master gardeners in the Master Gardeners of the Ozarks chapter. Of these, there are 64 who reside in Stone County, 42 in Taney County, three in Christian County, four in Barry County, one in Howell County and two who reside in Boone County, Arkansas. The master gardeners were led this year by Chris Witherington, president, Wanda Nicol, vice-president, Gloria Cowper-Jen, secretary, and Cathy Preator, treasurer. Tim Schnakenberg served as advisor for the master gardener activities in the Stone and Taney County area. The chapter met monthly, alternating between locations in Stone and Taney County and the executive committee met monthly between meetings. The chapter is very proud to report that there are 35 Emeritus members who have served at least ten years in the program. Some are now approaching 20 years of service.

### Internal Grant Program Funded Seven Special Projects

The internal grant committee in 2021 allocated \$4,919 for eight projects: Kimberling Senior Center, Kimberling Area Library Children's Garden, Bonniebrook, Pregnancy Life Line, Faith Lutheran Church, Festival of Trees, Forsyth Demonstration Garden and Cape Fair Community Center. The committee was chaired by Penny Meador. Funds for projects originated from local educational program activities and fund-raisers.



*Master Gardener executive committee members helped lead the chapter in 2021. L to R: Wanda Nicol; Chris Witherington; Gloria Cowper-Jen; Cathy Preator.*



*Class of 2021 photo following graduation - Front Row – (L to R) Steve Pulliam, Rob Wyer, Jerry Markle; Back Row – Susan Martin, Laurie Stallions, Eileen Atherton, Carolyn Spence-Cagle, Sharon Salmons. Shane Haskins was unable to attend*



*A scene from the Fall Gardening Workshop in Reeds Spring*

### **Master Gardener Courses Brought in New Members**

Nine new master gardeners were trained through a training class that occurred in Branson and the statewide on-line master gardener course. A graduation ceremony was conducted at a Master Gardener meeting at Shepherd of the Hills in December.

### **Fall Gardening Workshop Brought Out 130 Participants!**

The gardening public enjoys participating in the Fall Gardening Workshop for reliable advice on gardening in the Ozarks. There were 130 participants that attended in Reeds

Spring in September. Topics included this year included “Growing Vegetables and Improving Your Soil” by Nahshon Bishop; “Enchanting Lillies” with Sue Rendall; “Growing Successful Rose Gardens” with Bill Aldrich; and, “Veg Out” with Oscar Cross. In addition to the program, there was a plant sale, silent auction and vendor booths. This successful program was chaired by Joanne Anderson. Ninety-five percent of participants reported that they plan to make changes in their gardening as a result of attending.

### **Food Availability Emphasis in 2021**

The master gardeners made a conscience decision to be more heavily involved in contributions to food pantries in 2021. Lists of local food pantries were compiled and distributed for places to bring garden produce during the season. In a final report for the year, it was recorded that 1,300 pounds of garden produce was donated. In addition, the chapter participated in the annual Festival of Trees project in Branson. Groups from around Branson contribute a Christmas tree that would be auctioned off to support the Christian Action Ministries food pantry. In addition, financial votes from the public were taken for the “People’s Choice Award”. Our tree won the award with the most votes. Altogether, the tree brought in \$1,215 for the food pantry! Several members have been involved with Pregnancy Life Line (PLL) for several years. Produce is grown by volunteers in the community garden in Branson West and liberally shared with families who use the PLL program.



*Members of the Festival of Trees Committee with the tree they decorated and was sold for donations to a local food pantry.*

### **Many Garden Programs Were Cancelled Due to the Pandemic**

Due to a lingering COVID-19 pandemic, it was decided to cancel plans for the Spring Gardening Workshop, Bohemian Rhapsody Garden Tour at Bonniebrook and many of the monthly garden programs offered.



*Volunteers at Pregnancy Life Line getting vegetable beds prepared for the growing season.*





*Cape Fair Community Center*



*Kimberling Area Library Children's Garden*



*Faith Lutheran Church in Branson – A location that has hosted many public educational programs over the years.*

## **Education and Improved Landscape Emphasis in our Communities**

Some of the many other ongoing projects that made a significant impact in local communities included the Bonniebrook Homestead landscaping, Forsyth Demonstration Garden, Corps of Engineers Project Office Landscaping, Central Crossing Senior Center landscaping, Cape Fair Community Center landscaping, Ozarks Lake Country Senior Center garden, Kimberling Area Library Children's Garden and the Stone County courthouse and library landscaping. Some of the work for these projects were curtailed due to pandemic restrictions, but with safe social distancing practices, the committees were able to continue on with some of their projects. There were many more smaller projects that are too innumerable to cover, but combined they make a startling impact throughout our region. Pictures on this page are a sampling of some of the many projects that local Master Gardener volunteers are involved in.



*US Army Corps of Engineers Project Office near the Dewey Short Visitor's Center – A large committee oversees the grounds at this site using funds provided by the Corps and it has become a place of beauty and education for tourists who visit. This is one of the longest-running projects of the Master Gardeners of the Ozarks.*