

The Latest Dirt

MGACRA NEWSLETTER

Jan – Feb
2011
Volume 21 Issue 1

2011 Master Gardener Gala Defies the Snow

Snow, Snow, Snow! We had no doubt that the 2011 Master Gardener Gala would go on despite the 5 or so inches of snow that fell the day before. The roads got cleared so most people could come out. And come out they did! Thursday, January 27, 2011 was quite a day. Many volunteers showed up in the morning to help set up. David Rodriguez was there before almost anyone, setting up tables, later joined by Stan Zack, Anne Kline, and Thad Dogbert (husband of Mary Alice Dogbert).

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MGACRA Board Officers for 2011

Our newly elected MGACRA Board Officers for 2011 are:

Laura Collinsworth, President

Tina Will, Vice President

Ron Singleton, Secretary

Betsy Ryan, Treasurer

These newly elected individuals are a capable and experienced board committed to sustaining the MGACRA and its mission. Meet your officers on page 3.



*Ron Singleton, Tina Will,
Laura Collinsworth, Betsy Ryan*

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Presidents Message



Laura Collinsworth

I look forward to 2011. While stepping into the shoes of the MGACRA Presidents who have served before me is a bit scary, I am encouraged because I have an experienced Board leading with me.

The Master Gardener of the Central Rappahannock Area (MGACRA) organization has existed since 1990. Our mission is to promote continuing service opportunities and educational activities for Master Gardeners, while associating and working with people of similar interest.

We fulfill our mission through our many projects and programs. I hope that you will continue to explore the many opportunities available through new and existing projects. Your passion to teach

environmentally friendly practices and creative methods to reach the public in ever widening avenues promises to make 2011 the best year yet.

I look forward to serving you as President. Together we will expand our influence in our community and continue the good work we have begun.

Sincerely,
Laura Collinsworth
President MGACRA

Executive Board of Directors

- President:** Laura Collinsworth, 699.6098
- Vice President:** Tina Will, 374.5233
- Treasurer:** Betsy Ryan, 659.4425
- Secretary:** Ron Singleton, 898.8621
- Past President:** Cathy Smith, 785.9540

State/County Representatives

- Virginia MGA:** Gwen Pote, 752.0405
- Caroline:** Open
- Fredericksburg:** Josh Maddox, 373.8981
- King George:** Beth Elkins, 775.2464
- Spotsylvania:** Cathy Smith, 785.9540
- Stafford:** Linda Dunn, 720-8014

Committee Chairs

- Education:** Karen Ehrhard, 786.4327
- Historian:** Beth Daly, 659.6098
- Parliamentarian:** Open
- Membership:** Open
- Editor:** Stanley Zack, 752-0028
- Web:** Michelle Myers, 834.8151
- Junior Master Gardeners:**
Judy Deffenbaugh, 286.1986
- RAAI:** John Elkins, 775.2464
- Fund Raiser:** Open
- Volunteer Office Coordinator:**
Gwen Pote, 752.0405

Virginia Cooperative Extension Agents

- Spotsylvania:** John Howe, 582-7096
- Stafford:** Guy Mussey, 899-4020
- Historic Sites Representative:**
Joan Lindsey, 371.7676
- Belmont:** Terry Drew, 371-2015
- Chatham:** Joan Lindsey, 371.7676
- Kenmore/Ferry Farm:**
Elaine Reardon, 373.4812
- Mary Washington House:**
Pat Lovett, 786 8600

All numbers are 540 area code unless indicated otherwise.

The Latest Dirt – Master Gardener Association of the Central Rappahannock Area

The Latest Dirt is a bimonthly publication of the Master Gardener Association of the Central Rappahannock Area (MGACRA), an organization dedicated to furthering horticultural education and volunteerism within the community. The opinions expressed are those of the volunteers and are not necessarily those of the Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Meet Your 2011 MGACRA Officers

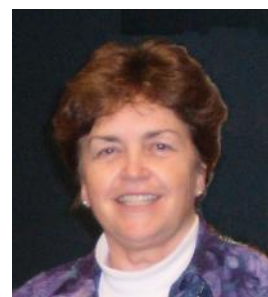


President

Laura Collinsworth

Laura joined the Master Gardener program in 2006 while serving on Stafford County's Beautification Committee and working with the R-Board on various County-wide educational programs. In her words: "My mother and grandmother were both avid gardeners and they were willing to teach me how to garden. However, I found that gardening in the Deep South isn't nearly the same as in Virginia. I had a lot to learn. The Master Gardener program offers the opportunity not just to learn, but to teach environmentally friendly practices. What could be better than that? By the way, I grew up on the Gulf Coast, mainly in Louisiana and Mississippi. I may not have grown up in Virginia but I got here as fast as I could."

Tina enjoys many aspects of horticulture, especially knowing the names of plants (all kinds), and finding the right place to grow them. She has a Masters degree in Environmental Education and an Associate's degree in Ornamental Horticulture and has worked at garden centers and as a plant inspector in Maryland. Tina shares her horticultural knowledge, not only with her Master Gardener colleagues, but also with the community as well. This earned her the coveted Master Gardener Education award in 2008. She loves the new Cossey Botanical Park and hopes to see it become a known work of the VCE! She welcomes all suggestions for speakers at our General Membership Meetings.



Vice President

Tina Will



Treasurer

Betsy Ryan

"Dear Master Gardeners, thank you again for choosing me as your treasurer. As part of your elected and appointed representative group, I work to support our organization's goals and ensure that we can meet our Association's financial responsibilities. In the near future, members of MGACRA will be able to sign on to our website and review my monthly financial reports. Posted, you will see each deposit and expense that reflects our 2011 budget. I invite you to contact our leadership or attend our board meetings if you have a Master Gardener project you would like to see funded. My goal is to be a good steward of MGACRA funds and with your continued support I feel sure I will be successful. Happy Gardening!"

Ron Singleton was elected secretary of MCAGRA in the fall of 2010 and is responsible for the organization's board minutes and other recordkeeping. He became a Master Gardener in 2006 after completing the Master Gardener training program in 2005 in King George County. He is a longtime resident of Spotsylvania County and has been active as a Master Gardener volunteer in MGACRA's annual "plant clinics" at the Rt. 3 Farmer's Market and Salem Church Library, where citizens can have their horticulture questions answered and plants diagnosed for problems. Ron is a Virginia Certified Horticulturist and an associate member of the Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association. He holds a Career Studies Certificate in Horticulture from Germanna Community College, where he completed 18 credit-hours of college coursework in horticulture over a period of three years under the direction of Dr. Michael Read. Ron and his wife, Judy, have two grown children.



Secretary

Ron Singleton

2011 Master Gardener Gala

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Ann Gorrell
Chair
MGACRA Gala

Kari Thompson, Décor Chair, donated a whopping bunch of gorgeous flowers she had used for a wedding show at Belmont the previous weekend. Many thanks to her. Betsy Ryan, Cathy Boes, Bebe Jones, Mary Alice Dogbert, Brooke Melville and Tina Will turned these fresh flowers into lovely bouquets to decorate the tables. The stage was set with very simple forced curly willow and orchid arrangements and gave the appearance that Spring must be just around the corner.

Beth and John Elkins, a fabulous team I'd say, served as our official Greeters. Always so cordial, they had everyone sign in (over 80 attended) and pick up a program. (Thanks to Gwen Pote for getting the programs done.) Betsy Ryan, our faithful Treasurer, was on hand in case anyone wanted to pay their dues. (By the way, \$20 dues to MGACRA are due in January. It isn't too late to send in your dues; actually it would be greatly appreciated.) Teresa Fisher, our membership chair and "The Latest Dirt" editor, was there also to give

out membership cards. Such efficiency...

Caren Meyer and Michelle Meyer made a great mother/daughter team in running the banquet. Talk about efficiency! Joan Levander, Anne Kline (rubber gloves and all), Anita Tuttle, Beth Malmquist, Jean Billings, Eileen Chartters and Mary Stram were very effective in handling details of the banquet. Many thanks to you all. I must admit the food was awesome. Thanks everyone for bringing such a variety.

President Laura Collinsworth welcomed everyone and set the tone for a fun evening.



We were pleased to have Bill Scott, President of the Virginia Master Gardener Association, and his wife, Janet, join us. Bill explained the importance of VMGA and the endowment they set up for the position of the Master Gardener coordinator at VA Tech, in which Dave Close serves. Also welcomed were past presidents of MGACRA, Betty Marcum, Linda Dunn and Stan Zack,

and VCE friends, Guy Mussey and Gwen Pote from the Stafford Office, John Howe from the Spotsylvania Office and Terry Misch from the King George Office.

Judy Deffenbaugh was given the opportunity to tell us what her new class of Junior Master Gardeners did in 2010. What an impressive group of young people, especially Judy's two sons who returned to assist with the new class. These young men were certainly patient standing on stage while their mom spoke highly about them and the group. Many thanks to Judy for taking on this wonderful project and dedicating the time and talent to do so.

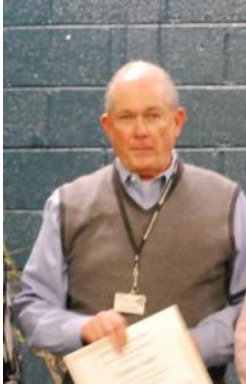
Next Guy recognized the Fall 2010 Class as one of the biggest and busiest classes he can remember. Gwen announced the names of the newly certified Master Gardeners and had them come up on the stage to be recognized and photographed.

President Laura then recognized the 2010 chairs of committees, area and historic site representatives, and board members. Most chairs will continue for 2011 and the new slate of officers was welcomed: Laura Collinsworth, President (Laura wouldn't read her own name by the way), Tina Will, Vice President, Ron Singleton, Secretary, and Betsy Ryan continues as Treasurer. Linda Dunn will fill the empty chair for Stafford Representative. Linda Burch, although not in atten-

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dance, was recognized along with those speakers for the 2010 Salem Church Library series. This series will continue on the 4th Tuesday of each month at the Library at 7 p.m. Check it out on the web page: MGACRA.org.

Chuck Heath was hailed for volunteering the most hours (384 hours) in 2010.



This years 2000 hours award goes to Richard Hicks. Jean Johnson still tops



the career record in our district with 6,677 hours. Way to Go Chuck and Jean!! 8 new Master Gardener Volunteers were certified.

Fifty-seven Master Gardeners were recertified. Thank you for your service, and getting in your hours to be recorded by Mary Marshall (Thanks, Mary).

Tina Will, MGACRA Vice President, assisted President Laura in recognizing the Volunteer Hours Awards.

The 2011 Rising Stars are



Susan Gingrich and Josh Maddox. They have demonstrated potential leadership skills as they have become active in the Master Gardener program and MGACRA and will receive a one-year membership in MGACRA.



Ann Gorrell was presented the 2010 Education Award for joyfully presenting programs and workshops on herbs for the past 13 years. (I have to say I was and am very humbled by this award. Thank you. ag)

Carl Kline (Anne Kline's husband) was our official photographer. Thank you, Carl, and we look forward to seeing some of the photos in The Latest Dirt.

Everyone jumped right in and put tables and chairs away and cleaned up the gym. We were done by 8:30 pm, turned out the lights, and shut the doors.

Thank you for all your help. Now we look forward to Spring (hurry please). We place our catalog orders and dream of even more glorious gardens, lawns, container gardens AND volunteering as VCE Master Gardeners. Thanks to all of you for being a Virginia Master Gardener and all you do. Ain't It Great??? Yes Indeedie!

—Ann Gorrell



A special thank you to Guy and Gwen for their support to the MGACRA.

Upcoming Educational Events

MGACRA General Membership Meetings

The majority of the meetings are at the Central Regional Rappahannock Library (CRRL) at 7pm at 1201 Caroline Street, Fredericksburg, VA. Except for April.

March 16, 2011

CRRL Speaker;
Virginia Rockwell,
Gentle Gardener



Topic: *Is Grass*

always the "greenest" choice?

Beautiful alternatives to turf grass that will help clean up our waterways, too. **April 20, 2011**

Location: Porter
Library 2001
Parkway Blvd,
Stafford, VA



Speaker: Connie

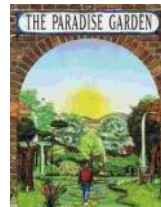
Hilker Topic: *Heirloom Roses*

Salem Church Library

MGACRA is also sponsoring monthly talks at the Salem Church Library in Spotsylvania at 7pm on the fourth Tuesday of each month. The upcoming schedule is:

February 22nd

by Laurie Clarkston
*You, too, Can have
a Paradise Garden*



March 22

by Gwen Pote
***Emerald Ash
Borer and
Other Forest Pests***



April 26

by Michelle Potter
Composting 101



Composting 101 Classes

Learn how to compost or learn how to perfect your composting process. You will learn how, what, and where to compost as well as take home some starter compost.



This class is FREE, and once you complete the class you can get an Earth Machine compost bin from the R-board for only \$25.

Classes are held at the Rowser Building, 1739 Jefferson Davis Highway.

Upcoming classes:

Thursday, March 3, 7PM

Thursday, April 7, 10AM

Saturday, May 7, 10AM

Spring Gardening

In my rush to start working in my yard, the beds remained unmade, dishes sat on the counter and I did not complete my Pilates tape. I emerged at 8 am, sun screened, large straw hat, and covered from head to toe with long sleeves and pants. With my recent bout with melanoma, I have vowed to take extra precautions. No more cutting grass in the middle of the afternoon, wearing my old ball cap and I will conclude my yard work by 10 am. It was a beautiful morning. The nectarine we planted last spring was budding despite the constant pruning by deer. Many of the new daffodils bloomed and others show promise with lots of green. The gorgeous orange and red tulips from the previous year show no signs of emerging. I saw tunnels in the garden, the voles or moles have eaten well.. After cleaning non decomposed materials, ever present weeds, and blown in trash, I stirred the compost I laid down last fall in my perennial bed. After reading about starting some seeds directly in the cool soil, I am experimenting with peas, broccoli, beets, spinach, and Brussels sprouts. I also filled a small planter with selections for my salads, lettuces and spinach, high enough off the ground from bunnies.

As you can guess, one thing lead to another; the herb garden needed cleaned and pruned, planters emptied, snow trampled raspberry canes trimmed and placed on the trellis and on and on. As I reached down to clear weeds from tulips I placed around the mail box, I caught site of my watch. It was 10:30. I resisted the temptation to do, "just one more thing" and I went in to the house to start this note to you. Garden in good health.

--Betsy Ryan

Annual Gathering of the Boxwood

The Saturday after Thanksgiving was a great day to meet with other Master Gardeners (MG) at Rokeby Farm outside of Fredericksburg to help with the annual gathering of the boxwood. The weather was a bit chilly but we were all thankful that it was not raining and we were eager to work off a few pounds from our holiday meals. We had 20 MGs, MG Interns and family members show-up to help with this project. MG Laurie Clarkston has been organizing this fund raiser and educational opportunity each year for almost 20 years! The money is used to fund the many MG projects we undertake each year. A big thank-you goes to Laurie for taking on this very worthwhile project each year.

Rokeby Farm has a large

boxwood garden that is laid out in the same configuration as the main level floor plan of the house. Laurie starts out by giving a demonstration of how to thin out the boxwood which makes the plant healthier by allowing in more light and encouraging growth. Her talk highlights "Restoration" pruning. Decayed, damaged and diseased limbs are trimmed out and all the plants are fertilized. This year we used a granular 4-2-2 mixture that is specifically produced for boxwood. In the past, Laurie has used 10-10-10 and also a chicken manure fertilizer that she said worked great.

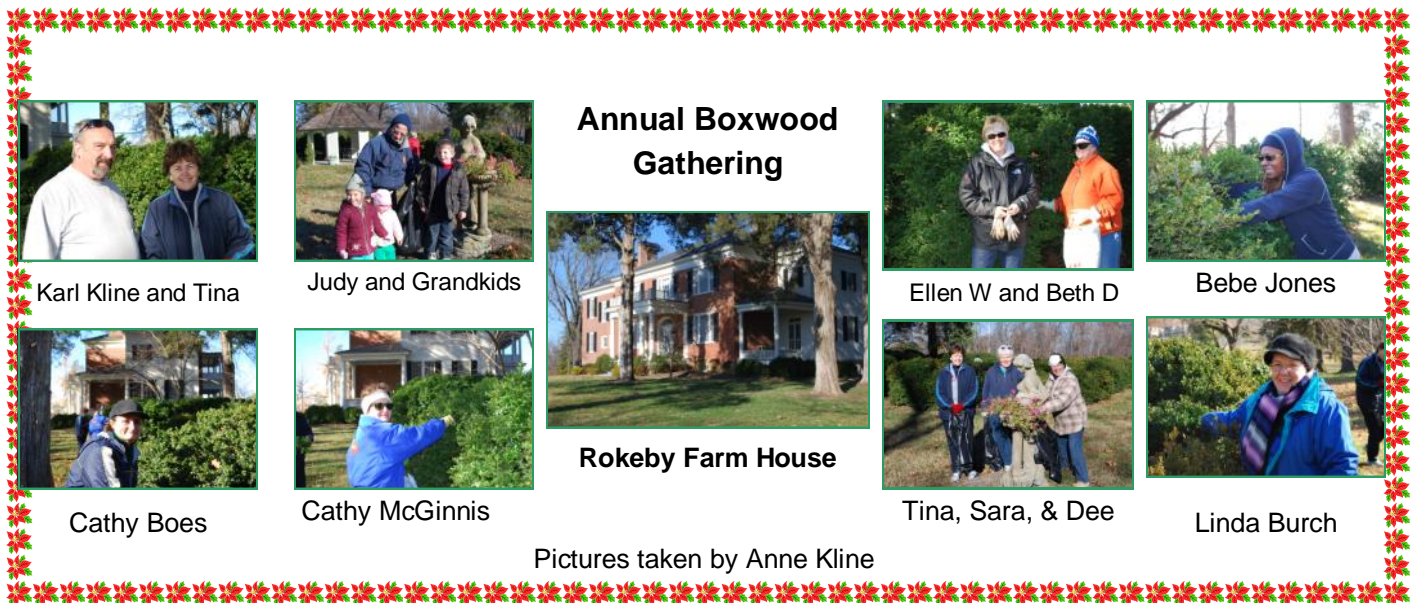
After all the boxwood hedges were trimmed and fertilized, the volunteers were treated to cookies, cider and hot chocolate along with a

tour of the historic house. The trimmed pieces are all bagged and used to make boxwood wreaths.

Two workshops are held each year at Shiloh Baptist Church on Sophia Street in downtown Fredericksburg for the general public. It is a fun evening to go and make your own wreath with the help of Master Gardeners. The form, wire hanger, boxwood and informative class are all included for the great price of \$20. If you prefer to buy a readymade wreath the cost is \$30. Bows, additional berries and decorations are available for a small additional price.

Please consider joining us next year for this very worthwhile and educational project.

--Anne Kline



Green Alternatives for De-icing

Although we've been having wonderful weather lately, winter is far from over. So consider these alternatives for those iced over walk ways.

De-icing salt has long been used as an inexpensive way to clear snow and ice from roadways, driveways, sidewalks, and commercial areas. Although salt is a convenient and commonly used deicer, it has been associated with a number of environmental concerns. As a result some cities in the Snow Belt are experimenting with alternative deicers.

Rock salt (aka sodium chloride or NaCl) is the cheapest and most commonly used type of deicer. It has been reported that Canada uses about five million tons of rock salt per year, most of which ends up in our lakes and rivers. Ecosystems adjacent to salted roads are often damaged by the contact. Plants are damaged or killed, water and soil is contaminated, and in severe cases wildlife can become ill or die.

Salt can cause serious damage to your lawns and gardens, so you want to minimize its use.

Alternatives are:

Sand: Often used in bitter cold areas to increase traction and will not harm your lawn or garden. It does need to be properly cleaned up in the spring to avoid clogging drains and sewers. It also easily absorbs contaminants like oil and chemicals, carrying them into the waterways with spring thaw.

Kitty litter: Clay based litter is most often used to increase traction. The use of doormats and area rugs in your house eliminates most of the tracked-in litter. Use a dust mask when applying it to the icy/snowy area if you suffer from respiratory problems, as there is some dust residue from some types of litter. It can be swept into the lawn and surrounding area once thaw begins with little or no harmful effects to the surrounding area.

There are also a variety of synthetic deicers, some more eco-friendly than others. The greener the product, the more expensive it is likely to be. Most are a combination of salt combined with five other common materials:

□ **Calcium Chloride (CaCl₂):** less harmful to vegetation but corrosive to metal and can leave a residue on carpets and shoes and is harmful to pets' paws. Three times more expensive than salt but you need a third less. This product works down to - 25° F.

□ **Potassium Acetate (KC₂H₃O₂):** the most biodegradable of all the de-icers, non-corrosive and safe for steel, but also lowers oxygen levels in water. Eight times more expensive than salt and can be hard to find. This product works down to -75°F.

□ **Calcium Magnesium Acetate (CMA):** this dolomitic limestone and acetic acid is salt-free and biodegradable. Less damaging to plants but is twenty times more expensive than rock salt and only works to +25° F.

□ **Magnesium Chloride:** corrosive to metal and must be used precisely as it attracts moisture from the air and makes the pavement wet if too much is used. Twice as expensive as salt and you will need to use twice as much and it works to - 13° F.

□ **Urea (NH₂CO NH₂):** less damaging than salt but can still burn your lawn and garden. It also causes massive algae blooms in local waterways and it performs - 20° F. It should be avoided.

Both Ethylene Glycol and Propylene Glycol are often found in "pet friendly" de-icers but are very toxic to all aquatic life and plants. Both should be avoided. Consider using the MET method to determine the type of de-icing material to use. MET is the ice melt Minimum Effective Temperature. If you live in a more temperate climate where sub zero temperatures rarely occur, you don't need an ice melter with a MET capacity of -31°C/-25°F. Always, again always, follow instructions and don't use too much. Adding more does not make the snow melt any faster! PETCO Ice Melt and Bare Ground Deluxe are two of the most highly recommended available brands for pets. There are many others available, and by doing some basic research you can find a product that fits both your needs and your pocketbook.

—Cathy Smith

Volunteer Opportunities

MGACRA is looking for volunteers for the following Board positions:

Co-chair for the Plant Clinics: Organize schedules for plant clinics.

Fundraising Chair: Oversee all fundraising efforts, verify receipts and inventory sheets which are turned in, work with co-chairs to explore new fundraising methods, meet with co-chairs quarterly, attend monthly Board meetings to report on new and ongoing activities.

Parliamentarian: attend monthly Board meeting, be familiar with MGACRA bylaws and Roberts Rules of Order, and consult Board on parliamentary issues.

Membership: Co-chair under Treasurer, coordinate with Treasurer for list of current MGACRA members, provide membership list to Board in March and again in October, send out yearly membership renewal notices, attend general meetings to sign up new members.

The Volunteer must be active Master Gardener and member of MGACRA.

Please contact Laura Collinsworth at l.collinsworth@verizon.net for more information.

A special thanks go to Laura Collinsworth for these pictures, and to Laurie Clarkston and all that participated in the 2010 fundraising wreath making workshop.



If you have an article on a program or activity that you would like published in The Latest Dirt, please submit it to Stan Zack at szack@infionline.net by the 1st of April. If you have pictures accompanying the article, please submit them and ensure each picture is titled.

2011 Master Gardener Awards

250 Hours

Karen Anderson Marsha Cuzzocrea Tara Hoit Joan Lindsey Clyde Meador
Michelle Potter Anna Reich

500 Hours

Eileen Chartters John Elkins Betsy Ryan

750 Hours

Laura Collinsworth Linda Dunn Ron Singleton Tina Will

1000 Hours

Sara Broyles Charles Heath

2000 Hours

Richard Hicks

Rising Stars

Susan Gingrich Josh Maddox

Education Award

Ann Gorrell

Newly Certified Master Gardeners

James Alderman Susan Gingrich Cindy Hall Kena Hengy Judith Jones Joshua Maddox
Ellen Westerholm Kathy Wirtala

2010 Master Gardener Class

Cathy Boes Keeley Bruce Pam Caton Tammy Cole Luralee Cornwell Tracy Day
Mary Alice Dogbert Susan Doyle Stacey Feindt Joan Gaston Rob Good Deborah Jack-
son Bebe Jones Sarah Laurie Bonny McQuillen Brooke Menille Henry Middleton
Ann Reamy Chris Rizzi David Rodriguez Marnie Scherder Deborah Smith
Michelle Thomas Michele Zusan

Recertified Master Gardeners

Deborah Albrecht Karen Anderson Carolyn Allen Jean Billings Caryl Brown
Sara Broyles Linda Burch Eileen Chartters Laurie Clarkston Laura Collinsworth
Marsha Cuzzocrea Elizabeth Daly Judy Deffenbaugh Terry Drew Linda Dunn
Beth Elkins John Elkins Ann Gorrell Mary Ellen Green Charles Heath Richard Hicks
Elaine Benzio-Hild Dee King Anne Kline Linda Kline Dawna Lambrecht
Helen Lawrence Lin Leong Soon Leong Joan Levander Joan Lindsey Judy Little
Pat Lovett Beth Malmquist Betty Marcum Mary Marshall Catherine McGinnis
Clyde Meador Caren Meyer Michelle Meyer Frances Neuhard Darlene Ochsenknecht
Gwen Pote Michelle Potter Betsy Ryan Ron Singleton Catherine Smith Jim Steele
Mary Stram Jane Thomann Jan Toperoff Anita Tuttle Susan Van de Putte
Jody Wilken Tina Will Clara Yates Stan Zack