

2005 Annual Report
Louisiana Master Gardener™
Extension Volunteer Program

The Louisiana Master Gardener™ Extension Volunteer Program complements and strengthens the LSU AgCenter's leadership and education in the area of consumer horticulture by implementing a statewide volunteer program to enhance consumer horticultural education.

Gardening is the number one pastime in United States. The Louisiana Master Gardener™ program is a volunteer program of the LSU AgCenter that teaches participants all about gardening. The LMG program comprises two parts. The first is recruiting and instruction of new volunteers. Classes are conducted throughout the state. Each class covers one or two topics, and the course usually takes 3 months to complete. Classes are taught by LSU AgCenter and university faculty, industry, veteran LMGs and gardening experts.

Upon completion of the course, volunteers are asked to perform a minimum number of required volunteer hours and continuing education hours each year to maintain their certification. Learning and sharing their gardening knowledge as Louisiana Master Gardeners in their communities provides a worthwhile experience to each participant and to all who receive assistance through this LSU AgCenter volunteer program.

Twenty-two Louisiana Master Gardener programs encompass 46 parishes, which represent 96% of Louisiana's population centers. LMGs are partners with LSU AgCenter personnel and officially represent the LSU AgCenter. The program allows Extension to extend education to an ever-increasing gardening audience and meet the public demand for information. The increased need for consumer horticulture information and improved public access to the LSU AgCenter has proven that highly trained LMGs presenting research-based information are recognized in their communities as primary resources for unbiased information.

No other one program has contributed more visibly and effectively to the overall productivity of the horticultural area of the LSU AgCenter in the last 12 years than the LMG Program.

Volunteer opportunities identified and approved by Extension faculty are varied and meet local parish needs. They include working with school and 4-H youth, nursing home residents, hospital patients, gardeners new to the area and new gardeners, answering telephone calls, performing on-site plant health-care clinics, using demonstration and community gardens, public presentations and workshops, pest identification and recommendations, best management practices, garden shows and plant sales, municipal and Habitat for Humanity landscape projects, media efforts (newsletters, cable TV broadcasts), partnering with civic organizations and municipal entities, educational tours, plant trials and evaluations, urban tree protection and preservation, state conference and on-site consultations.

The Louisiana Master Gardener program trained 346 new volunteers, increasing the active number of LMGs to 1,094. These volunteers provided 39,043 hours of their time to Extension educational projects. Through the efforts of these volunteers, 56,222 people were exposed to researched-based consumer horticulture information. This volunteer service, equivalent to 20 full-time employees, increases the human capacity of Extension by 13 percent. The economic value of this service translates to a \$698,585 benefit to the State of Louisiana.

As impressive as these numbers are, what really matters is what these highly trained and talented volunteers have accomplished in their communities. The Louisiana Master Gardener program enhances Extension's capability to meet local educational needs. Their partnership with Extension faculty has allowed for a continued expansion of programs and increased educational outreach to new audiences.

Selected LMG Program Highlights

Ascension/St. James LMG Program (Ascension, St. James parishes)

Delta LMG Program (Madison, East Carroll, West Carroll, Tensas, Franklin, Richland parishes)

East Baton Rouge LMG Program (East Baton Rouge Parish)

Speaker's Bureau – MGs developed and produced over 20 slide and PowerPoint programs and presented them at 42 public venues reaching over 1,600 people.

Community Gardens – Thirteen gardens received volunteer assistance, including Habitat for Humanity, Baton Rouge Botanic Garden, LSU Hilltop Arboretum, McMain's Development Center and BREC Magnolia Mound Plantation Kitchen Garden.

Annual Plant Sale – Volunteers learned and practiced plant propagation skills, researched plant cultural requirements, developed educational point-of-purchase signage and conducted a Plant Health Care Clinic.

Plant Health Care Clinics – These are conducted during spring, summer and fall at local businesses and community events. Homeowners have direct access to the LSU AgCenter and receive gardening information.

Habitat for Humanity – Volunteers assisted with plant purchases, homeowner education, landscape design and plant maintenance. Once landscape installation is completed, ongoing education is provided by neighborhood meetings and timely newsletters.

LMG Office – MGs answered gardening telephone calls and performed clerical work needed to distribute gardening information to parish clientele.

Greater New Orleans LMG Program (Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard parishes)

City Park Botanical Garden -- In hurricane-devastated Orleans Parish, Master Gardener volunteers assisted park personnel with removing storm-damaged plants and replanting new gardens.

Lafayette LMG Program (Lafayette, Vermillion parishes)

Cable TV broadcast

Dr. Henry Tyler Health Center garden

4-H Garden Contests

Habitat for Humanity landscaping

Children's garden – Lafayette LMGs designed, planted and maintained a comprehensive demonstration garden located at the ULL Ira Nelson Horticulture Center. Volunteers conducted 28 outdoor classes for 842 area students at the garden.

LaTerre LMG Program (Lafourche, Terrebonne, St. Mary parishes)

Natchitoches LMG Program (Natchitoches Parish)

Caroline Dormone Nature Preserve, Briarwood "Tom Sawyer Day" – MGs helped the curators maintain and develop new plant areas.

Extension office gardening hotline – During spring, phones were manned by volunteers to take calls and help answer gardening questions.

Natchitoches Parish's 5th Annual "Bloomin' on the Bricks" – Master Gardeners participated in this city event by offering horticulture seminar topics and conducting a Plant Health Care Clinic.

Habitat for Humanity – MGs provided donated plants and planting expertise to complete the house and consulted with the new homeowners on plant maintenance and establishing a lawn.

Garden symposium – MGs produced a community garden symposium at the City Arts Center.

4-H Achievement Day – Master Gardeners taught two classes throughout the day.

Northcentral LMG Program (Union, Bienville, Lincoln, Jackson, Winn, Claiborne parishes)

Expo in Ruston

Northeast LMG Program (Ouachita, Morehouse parishes)

Mangham Junior High beautification – Goal was to create an outdoor environment that enhanced the appearance of the school and functions as an outdoor classroom used by students in math and science classes.

H.V. Adams School in Bastrop – Students, parents and teachers were taught landscaping, plant preparation and safety. The project was funded by a "Learn and Serve" grant obtained by MGs.

Robinson School in Monroe – Master Gardeners taught students and teachers about beautifying their school by landscaping different parts of the school grounds.

U.S. Highway 165 – Community beautification project enhanced sections of the state highway that runs through Bastrop.

Ouachita Parish Alternative Center – Students learned where food comes from by planting 4'x4' vegetable gardens. Participation in this LMG project helped reduce ADHD symptoms, build self esteem and complement math, science and English curricula.

LSU AgCenter's Ag Alley – Thousands of youth and adults learned about Louisiana agriculture. Master Gardener volunteers participated with the "Horticulture Alley."

Northwest LMG Program (Caddo, Bossier parishes)

Extreme Garden Makeover -- A gardening contest and learning experience was used to teach people about growing gardens in Louisiana involving Shreveport area Master Gardeners and Shreveport Green with several generous sponsors. Over 1,500 people received gardening information and have the opportunity to view landscaping best management practices. The winner's garden will be video taped and Southern Living will provide a landscape plan.

Tour de Jardin – Master Gardeners' annual spring garden tour exposed guests to several private gardens in the Shreveport and Bossier area and promoted best management gardening practices to the public.

LMG office – Master Gardeners answered gardening telephone calls and performed clerical work needed to distribute gardening information to parish clientele.

Piney Hill LMG Program (Webster Parish)

Planting workshops – Master Gardeners conducted planting workshops at three community events: Moon Over Minden, Butterfly Festival in Haynesville and Jonquil Jubilee in Gibsland.

Educational youth programs – Volunteers participated in the Webster Parish 4-H Fun Day with over 600 youth, and they sponsored and judged the Webster 4-H Jr. Gardening Contest for 100 youth.

Buds to Blooms – MGs sponsored and hosted a public horticulture seminar in Minden during the spring.

Trails to Trellises – An annual garden tour of homes in a tri-parish area (Webster, Claiborne, Bienville) was developed and conducted by Master Gardeners.

Pointe Coupee/WBR/Iberville LMG Program (Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge, Iberville parishes)

Rapides/Avoyelles LMG Program (Rapides, Avoyelles parishes)

River Region LMG Program (St. Charles, St. John parishes)

Heritage vegetable garden -- Volunteers established and maintained a heritage vegetable garden at Destrehan Plantation, including conducting tours and providing gardening information to the public.

Gardening workshops – Conducted educational workshops for gardening residents.

Community beautification – Master Gardeners assisted with five projects at East and West Bank Bridge Parks, Hahnville High School and Luling Elementary School.

Tomato trials – Volunteers participated in tomato variety trials and evaluations.

LMG office – Master Gardeners answered gardening telephone calls and performed clerical work needed to distribute gardening information to parish clientele.

Sabine LMG Program (Sabine Parish)

Southwest LMG Program (Calcasieu, Beauregard parishes)

St. Helena LMG Program (St. Helena Parish) – *New program*

St. Martin/Iberia LMG Program (St. Martin, Iberia parishes)

St. Tammany LMG Program (St. Tammany Parish)

Northshore Spring Garden Show & Plant Sale – Master Gardeners presented seminar topics and conducted a Plant Health Care Clinic.

Keep Mandeville Beautiful plant salvaging program – Volunteers participated in a citywide effort to transplant plants destined to be destroyed by city roadway and construction projects to municipal sites like City Hall, Community Center and Tyler Thomas Memorial Playground.

Hubie Gallagher Park tree transplanting – Master Gardeners helped with the transplanting of eleven large live oak trees to improve their growth and long-term health and to provide much needed shade for this popular park and playground area.

Slidell Memorial Hospital's Rehabilitation Garden – Master Gardeners proposed, developed and maintained a unique garden space created for patients requiring recreational therapy as part of their medical rehabilitation. This garden is entirely container-planted for patient access. Master Gardeners partnered with the Eden Isles Garden Club to make this wonderful addition to the hospital.

Tangipahoa LMG Program (Tangipahoa Parish)

4-H Club meetings – Tangipahoa Parish Master Gardeners volunteered at 26 schools, teaching 756 students about growing hydroponic lettuce and the importance of a healthy diet.

State LMG Conference – Volunteers assisted with the state's annual conference.

Demonstration gardens – Maintained a demonstration garden and camellia garden at the LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station.

Landscape visits – Scheduled and conducted home/school/other garden & landscape visits providing recommendations.

Washington LMG Program (Washington Parish)

West and East Feliciana LMG Program (West Feliciana, East Feliciana parishes) – *New program*