

2006 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 endeavors.

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 gardening knowledge as a Louisiana Master Gardener in the community provides a worthwhile experience to each participant and to all who receive assistance through this LSU AgCenter volunteer program.

There are 21 Louisiana Master Gardener programs encompassing 48 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 13 years than the LMG Program.

Since program inception, 2,117 participants have graduated as Louisiana Master Gardeners, and the program's exceptional retention rate of 72% resulted in consumer horticulture educational outreach to 93,465 citizens during 2006.

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; utilizing demonstration and community gardens, public presentations and workshops; providing pest identification and recommendations; demonstrating best management practices; participating in garden shows and plant sales, municipal and Habitat for Humanity landscape projects and media efforts (newsletters, cable TV broadcasts); partnering with civic organizations and municipal entities; conducting educational tours, plant trials and evaluations, urban tree protection and preservation, state conferences and on-site consultations.

The Louisiana Master Gardener program trained 381 new volunteers, increasing the active number of LMGs to 1,420. These volunteers provided 49,949 hours of their time to Extension educational projects. Through the efforts of these volunteers, 93,465 people were exposed to research-based consumer horticulture information. This volunteer service, equivalent to 25.28 full-time employees, increases the human capacity of Extension by 7.6 percent. The economic value of this service translates to a \$917,226 dollar 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)

- "Prime Property" TV Broadcast.
- 4-H, Adult, and Senior Citizens Garden Contests/Award Programs.
- Answer Consumer Horticulture Telephone Calls.
- LMG exhibit at San Francisco Plantation Festival.
- Plant Sale.
- Soil Analysis Workshop.
- Horticulture Hints Distribution Centers.
- Gardening Presentations.

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

East Baton Rouge LMG Program (East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana)

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

Lafayette LMG Program (Lafayette, Vermillion)

- Acadiana Open-Channel TV Show – completely produced by Master Gardeners with gardening related topics.
- 4-H & Youth Development Garden Contest.
- Habitat for Humanity Landscaping.
- Children's Garden - Guided tours to 2nd graders following a science education curriculum.
- LMG Speaker's Bureau.
- Civitan Park – Partnering with Cajun Dome and UL to revitalize a small park using plants propagated by Master Gardeners.
- Themed Demonstration Gardens at the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center.
- Distribute 3,000 Horticulture Hints to local businesses.
- Produce a Monthly Newsletter.
- Spring "Festival de Fleur" and Fall Plant Sale.
- The Enabling Garden - a garden model used at homes of the elderly and handicapped.

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

- Golden Learning Opportunities - cooperating with NSU, LMGs presented gardening topics to adults 55 and older.
- Habitat for Humanity Landscape Projects.
- Terrebonne Parish Folklife and Culture Center Landscape Project.

- Themed Children’s Garden - garden tours and an educational program following State Basic Science Objectives.
- Home and Garden Trends - native plants and the use of container gardening for persons with declining physical capacities.
- Lafourche Library Garden Series.
- Rouse’s Home and Garden Show.
- Tomato Field Day.
- Weed Control for Louisiana Iris - a 3-acre test studying various herbicides.

Natchitoches LMG Program (Natchitoches)

- 4-H Cookery Day.
- 4-H Achievement Day.
- “Bloomin’ on the Bricks” community event.
- Parent/Child Butterfly Tea – developed a booklet on Butterflies and Butterfly Gardening.
- Oakland Plantation Bottle Garden and Demonstration Garden.
- Natchitoches Noisette Garden Symposium.
- Northwestern State University Gardens.
- The Detention Center Project – teaches inmates gardening practices and BMPs.
- Northcentral LMG Program (Union, Bienville, Lincoln, Jackson, Winn, Claiborne)

Northeast LMG Program (Ouachita, Morehouse)

- TV and radio shows providing gardening information.
- Demonstration Plots at Calhoun Research Station.
- Speakers’ Bureau.
- AgExpo.

Northwest LMG Program (Caddo, Bossier)

- Landscape Projects - Woody’s Home for Veterans, Gateway to the Town of Castor, Pioneer Heritage Museum on the LSU-S campus, & The Louisiana State Exhibit Museum.
- Le Tour des Jardins Garden Tour.
- Partnered with the City of Shreveport and acquired & renovated the Carriage House of the Randle T. Moore Center. The facility received \$50,000 funding from the local LMG program and houses the region’s LSU AgCenter horticulturist and LMG program.
- Spring Plant Sale.
- Prepared pecan samples at the Pecan Research Station.

Piney Hill LMG Program (Webster)

- “Buds and Blooms” – horticultural presentations.
- 4-H & Youth Development Garden Competition.
- Teaching Garden at Union Elementary School - third grade classes receive hands-on lessons related to current class work.
- "Trails to Trellis" garden tour

Rapides/Avoyelles LMG Program (Rapides, Avoyelles)

River Parishes LMG Program (St. Charles, St. John)

- Plant Health Clinic at Farmers Market
- Presented Educational Programs
- Provided landscape instruction and BMPs to teachers, students and parents
- Established an enviro-scape butterfly ecology program at an elementary school and trained science teachers on proper care of plants

Sabine LMG Program (Sabine)

- Solicited funds and installed a “Restful Garden” at Taylor House, a shelter for women

Southwest LMG Program (Calcasieu, Beauregard)

- Educational Programs and Plant Health Clinic at the Southwest Louisiana Garden Festival
- Speaker’s Bureau
- Calcasieu Extension Demonstration Garden
- Garden Symposiums
- 4-H Horticulture Field Day

St. Helena LMG Program (St. Helena)

- Designed & established landscape for Police Jury Adm. Bldg
- St. Helena Middle School “First Impressions” Landscape Project
- Established LMG resource library at St. Helena LSU Ag Office
- Educational Booths at St. Helena Parish Hospital Health Fair and St. Helena Parish Forest Festival
- Indoor Garden Project for Audubon Regional Library
- St. Martin/Iberia LMG Program (St. Martin, Iberia)

St. Tammany LMG Program (St. Tammany)

- Annual Plant Sale with proceeds funding the Bobby Fletcher, Sr. Scholarship
- Spring Garden Plant Show - residents received horticulture information on storm recovery landscaping
- Fire Station Landscape Improvement Project was designed and installed with fireman help.
- Habitat for Humanity Landscape Projects
- Published a Retail Nursery Listing assisting local nurseries to publicize their business hours, location and available plant material
- Hurricane Recovery Landscape Presentations at neighborhood libraries
- Answer Consumer Horticulture telephone calls

Tangipahoa LMG Program (Tangipahoa)

- 4-H & Youth Development Cookery Contests
- Conducted 4-H Pizza Garden Presentations
- Camellia Garden Stroll at Hammond Research Station
- Spring Garden Day on at Hammond Research Station
- Hammond Feed & Seed Open House
- Weed Display at Dairy Day
- Louisiana Master Gardeners State Conference – Registration & Conference Bags
- Propagated Camellia Collection at Hammond Research Station
- Taught LMG Class & Presented Educational Programs

- Demonstration Garden at Hammond Research Station
- Wrote newspaper articles and columns.
- Answer Consumer Horticulture telephone calls
- On-site Horticultural Consultations
- Habitat for Humanity in Hammond

Tri Parish LMG Program (Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge, Iberville)

- Habitat for Humanity in Plaquemine – collaborated with Dow Chemical of Louisiana, Bonnie Plant Farms, Murrell Farms, Callais Nursery, Dupont Nursery, Americorp, and City Year

Washington LMG Program (Washington)

- Hurricane Landscape Projects in Bogalusa and Franklinton
- Food Nutritional Program (FNP) Vegetable Gardening Projects with hands-on growing and preparing of vegetables for better nutrition and combating obesity
- Annual Vegetable Plant Sale – plants are produced at the Southeast Research Station with proceeds used to further LMG projects
- Victory Vegetable Garden at the Franklinton Museum
- Fruit and Ornamental Plant Pruning Demonstrations

West Feliciana LMG Program (West Feliciana)

- Spring Stroll of St. Francisville Benefit Garden Tour – partnering with the Feliciana Horticultural Society and the Greater St. Francisville Chamber of Commerce, proceeds funded the West Feliciana 4-H Jaclyn Garza Memorial Scholarship, West Feliciana Middle School Memory Garden, and the St. Francisville Farmers' Market