Great Year for Master Gardeners

By Jan Thompson

Can you believe it! 2023 is almost over! I start thinking of all the educational and community service projects that master gardeners were involved with this past year . . . and Wow! It’s obvious the Marais des Cygnes Master Gardeners were a busy group! We should be quite proud of our group and how we truly followed our Mission Statement.

Special Projects:
We have our annual Plant Sale which was a huge success! This event provides an opportunity for all the EMG volunteers to share their knowledge with the community on the locally grown plants as well as a major fund raiser.

“A September to Remember” Garden Tour was held in September with six amazing gardens. The garden tour gives us a chance to showcase the diverse gardens found in Miami County and another educational opportunity.

Garden Projects:
The Trial Garden moved to the Paola Community Garden this year. This move proved to be a fantastic one! A lot of work went into creating this deer-proof, rabbit-proof, weed-free, great soil garden. A great group effort went into the success of the trial garden.

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The Newsletter deadline is Noon on Thursday following the Tuesday Board meetings.
Committee planted 80 tulip bulbs this Fall. A beautiful garden to see this Spring!

Appreciate everyone taking the time to enter their volunteer hours online! There is still time to enter if you have not. Deadline is December 31st.

Be thinking about what committee(s) you would like to volunteer to work with for 2024. Katelyn will be sending out an email in January with the sign-up link.

Remember that all articles and pictures for the EMG Newsletter should now be sent to Rena T. at: wordet01@gmail.com.

Best wishes for Anita B-V. who is leaving us to help take care of her grandchildren. We so appreciate all she’s done for the Marais des Cygnes Master Gardeners! We will miss her!

With regret, we recently accepted the board resignation of Vickie V.S.. Vickie has had a lot going on this past year and feels she’s not able to give 100%. We wish her a speedy recovery and a better 2024!
Great Year Continued

Cut Flower Garden
The 2022 New Class made it their class project to start a cut flower garden at the Paola Community Garden. A space was created next to the trial garden within the fenced area for this project. They selected the flowers they wanted to grow, worked the soil and planted the seeds this past spring. The flowers flourished and were beautiful. Bouquets were delivered to the local assisted living facilities as well as the extension office. Truly a successful project and happy to say that the cut flower garden is planned for a 2nd year.

Miami County Fair – Horticulture and Floriculture
This is a fun event held each year in July. The master gardeners help in accepting and processing the open class entries for the horticulture and floriculture departments. We do need more volunteers for this project, so please consider becoming a volunteer. We would also like to see more EMG entries.

Seeds for Kids
The Seeds for Kids committee distributed a record number of seed packets to Miami and Linn County children. Presentations were made at Earth Day celebrations, local libraries and local elementary schools. A record number of entries were brought to the Miami County Fair which was very exciting to see!

Wreaths for Residents
For the second year, the master gardeners created wreaths for the residents of Vintage Park in Paola. A total of 40 wreaths were created and delivered. It’s obvious we have a lot of creative people in our group... the wreaths were beautiful!

Holiday Happiness
EMG budgeted for $1,000 with EMG members donating for a total of $1685 to be donated to the 3 area food pantries. Much appreciated by those in need and so glad we can continue this giving project.

4-H Scholarship
EMGs again donated $500 for their scholarships. Helen attended the scholarship presentation last year and enjoyed being a part of the event.

New Class
Welcome to the new class of five who completed their training recently and thank you for joining. You are encouraged to participate in any of our activities. We look forward to getting to know you!

Emeritus
Congratulations to Julie Perez and Michael Poss. Thank you for all for your contributions to EMG!

All these activities take numerous volunteer hours, organizational skills, and diligence.

Huge THANK YOU for ALL you do for the Marais des Cygnes Master Gardeners!!

Photos used in this article are from previous newsletters and submitted by several members.
December 10th at the Jackson Hotel the trial garden group invited all interested in our new location and what improvements we would like to make. There were eleven Master Gardeners and our guest Alexis Shaw, board member of the Paola Community garden. After introductions Alexis gave us a short history of the Paola Community garden. The garden was established but expected by the city to be temporary. The Industrial park development stalled, the garden was allowed to be permanent. The garden was originally started as a learning opportunity for the Paola Schools. Kid Wind, middle school STEM project building wind turbines was going to be a location of a turbine to help pump water to the gardens in the back area. FFA students were set to collect manure from their animals at school and work on composting kitchen scraps from the schools. The biology department was to take samples from the soil and water from a pond that was to be built, to verify that no chemicals were being used in the garden. Unfortunately COVID interrupted a great work in progress.

We learned that Biochar from Missouri Organics had been applied, Sheds were built and rain water collection was added to the sheds. Engineers were asked how to solve the low area problem with a pond to support watering individual gardens to rely less on city water. It was hoped that the Paola community garden would be able to write a grant to purchase the building and parking lot adjacent to the garden, allowing for an ADA pathway to be built helping people gain better access to the gardens. Even though the garden is owned by the city, maintenance has been through the help of BJ Johnson, of Shifting Gears, finding lawn care companies to donate their time to mow the grassy areas. There are two permanent gardens within its boundaries, one is from Alexis’ home, and the other is a memorial garden for Regan Johnson, BJ’s daughter, who had committed suicide. BJ is looking to make this a Butterfly waystation. Unfortunately the work day for her garden falls on our plant sale weekend.

There are blackberries, grapes and strawberries in the community garden. Our current trial garden is in a spot they had named the GIVING garden an actual vegetable plot that had donated vegetable sprouts planted there and would be harvested and shared with the community. Alexis told us there was a calendar full of events from Artists, sunrise yoga, and writers to bring people to the garden. What a novel concept for gardening bringing community together. Beauty, exercise, and discussion with like minded individuals in our garden. But as Master Gardeners we knew that already.

Wrapping up our Trial garden year, we had a wonderful harvest and the idea of this meeting was truly to find out what we think needs improved on. A few important Thank you notes to Smiths Appliances for dropping off cardboard. Becky and Vince Thorpe for providing goat manure, and Patty Trull for buying materials to build new larger pepper cages in exchange for our small cages.

So here is the new idea list to prepare for next year:

1. Soil Test: Collected 12-12-23 by Dennise and to be paid for out of the Trial garden budget.
2. Set up email system to notify of work days.
3. Compost bins need contents turned over to break down, Harley offered to bring his tractor with bucket.
4. Coffee grounds are now being collected from Scooters and the Jackson Hotel (and possibly Cowboy Coffee shop in Family Center.)
5. Getting cardboard from Beechner Grain (no tape removal!)
6. Contact Evergy about the chipped trees they remove for mulched paths, Chet said he would contact them.
7. The community shed needs organized.
8. Watering system designed: collection of items for drip irrigation.
9. Potential for additional manure donations: Jan T, Lynn C., Dennise’s contact for rabbit manure.
11. A new marking system for the plants. (I have paint markers that I would like to try but if there something else so we can compare. Right now the Sharpie fades in the sun.
12. Other donation sites? Any more ideas?

We would love to have more gardeners to join us to marvel at the beauty, exercise our minds and backs, and enjoy lively discussions about our passion for gardening and the community.
Master gardeners are so great and super creative!!

On Thursday, November 30 starting at 9:30, 18 master gardeners met to make 40 wreaths for the residents of the Paola Vintage Park. We also had a cookie exchange and enjoyed cider as well. Wreath making continued to noon with Simple Simon sandwiches provided by the EMG board.

It was a wonderful time of fellowship, exchanging ideas and cookie munching. Special thanks to Rena T. for providing the wreath forms which worked great!! Many thanks to Bille L. and Susan T. for helping to set up on Wednesday the 29th. Also thanks to all master gardeners for donating fabulous wreath making materials.

Wreaths were gently boxed and delivered to the Paola Vintage Park at 1:30 that day. Carol V., Lynn C., and Susan R. assisted with the delivery. Wreaths covered the dining table and hearth area at the assisted living and we were greeted by several residents curious about each gift. It was a wonderful holiday event and we do have an inventory of materials if EMG’s wish to do this again.

Photos by Becky T. and Billie L.

Seated, L-R: Becky T., Rena T., Lynn C., Billie L., Lorraine McG., Barb S.,
Standing, L-R: Susan., Lynn S., Lori H., Betsy H., Stephanie M., Carol W., Cyndi W., Monica C., Carol V,
(Peeking from behind) Susan R., Theresa B., and Chet McL. (Sorry if I got any names wrong!!)
8th Annual Garden Symposium
Gardening by Design

Inspirations: Why Do You Garden?

February 17th, 2024
9:00 to 3:45
Registration opens at 8:30

Living Proof Church
32401 Harmony Rd • Paola, KS 66071

Tickets are $45.00 per person. Seating is Limited!
Pre-registration is required by February 1st

This event is open to all!
The registration fee includes:
A gourmet boxed lunch, snacks, and all printed reference materials.

Register on line at:
https://tinyurl.com/2024MdCEMGSymposium
Payment can be made on line or by check.
(Please see details at time of registration.)
Driving directions available on registration page.

MdC EMGs receive 5 hours AT credit.
Other EMGs: Please ask your County Agent if AT credit is approved.
For more information call 913-294-4306.

You can also find the link on our Facebook page at:
www.facebook.com/mdcemg

Presented by:

K-State Research and Extension
Master Gardener
Marais des Cygnes District

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2023 Marais des Cygnes Extension Master Gardener Advanced Training

Please note: More trainings will be added throughout the year as they are scheduled.

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<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 23</td>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td>&quot;Native Plants Made Easier&quot;</td>
<td>Bob Lane, Leawood Park and Recreation Director</td>
<td>Leawood Garden Club, Cure of Ars Catholic Church, 6401 Mission Rd., Leawood. Learn how native plants are easy to use in all styles of gardening and how increasing pollinators are a benefit to the environment.</td>
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To join K-State Garden Hour, 12 PM 1st Wed. of each month. Register here for 2023: [http://hnr.ksu.edu/GardenHour](http://hnr.ksu.edu/GardenHour)

Lunch and Learn, 12:00 PM, Every 1st Thursday of the month. Native Plants at Noon, 12:00 PM, Every 3rd Thursday. Register for both webinars at [deeproots.org](http://deeproots.org) (past recordings available on website)

Barb S. is working on next years schedule and hopes to have more information in January. We want to thank her for all of the hard work she did for us this past year. GREAT JOB!!

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**USDA Zone Update**

by Lenora Larson

The USDA just released the new cold-hardiness zone map. We continue to warm up and are now Zone 6b. When I moved here in 1981, Paola was zone 5 and winters went to -25 degrees our first few years!! I'm not supposed to be happy, but I love global warming since I have serious zone-envy. I wanna be zone 7. So many cool plants!

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[Map image showing USDA Zone Update]