KITSAP MASTER GARDENER

2017

BY THE NUMBERS

- 294 certified WSU Kitsap Master Gardener volunteers
- 41 new Master Gardener volunteers trained
- 18,181 volunteer hours reported
- At national volunteer hourly rate: more than 1/2 a million dollars in labor savings for Kitsap County
- 10,708 one-on-one adult contacts.
- 5771 people received individualized help from MGs with 3128 specific questions answered at plant clinics.
- 118 people took series of 5 Organic Vegetable Gardening classes taught by 5 MG volunteer educators
- 2087 pounds of produce donated to foodbanks
- 1274 Youth learned and implemented gardening practices
- 100 percent of the 34 Kitsap MGs employed in the landscape/nursery/small farms industry are applying skills they learned with MGs to their livelihoods
- A majority of 2017 MG trainees surveyed (76%) reported saving money as a result of knowledge gained

Sustainable Gardening: Science-based techniques for productive gardens, clean water and healthy families

ISSUE

Puget Sound and Kitsap’s rivers, lakes and aquifers provide water for agricultural, residential, and recreational use. Stormwater runoff is the leading cause of pollution in the Puget Sound region. Scientists have found 23 pesticides in Washington streams, many at levels that may damage salmon and other wildlife. Studies find increased health risk among families (especially pets and children) using lawn and garden pesticides, which are easy to track into the house, bringing toxins indoors. Sustainable gardening techniques such as composting, mulching to prevent erosion and reducing use of garden chemicals prevents polluted stormwater runoff. Protecting existing trees and adding new trees and native plants to our gardens has been proven to reduce stormwater runoff and provide myriad other environmental benefits.

RESPONSE

The WSU Master Gardener Program began in the Seattle area in 1973. The Kitsap Master Gardener Program began in 1975 and celebrated 40 years in 2015. The Master Gardener name is well known and respected in our communities for friendly and unbiased advice on research-based gardening and environmental conservation. A survey of Pierce County Master Gardener clients showed that 42.9% of those visiting the Master Gardener Diagnostic clinics were referred by friends or family and 100% of the survey participants said they would recommend Master Gardeners to a friend. One person responded saying, “I like having someone to talk to that doesn’t have a vested interest in selling me something” and another: “Every time I’ve called, they’ve been very truthful with me.” This level of public trust allows Master Gardeners a unique and impactful role as community educators.

99% of 2017 customers at Kitsap Master Gardener plant clinics said they learned something helpful with 77% saying they plan to make changes in their gardening after talking with a Master Gardener. Word cloud from 2017 Kitsap customer responses.

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QUOTES

COMMENTS FROM NEW MASTER GARDENER TRAINEES:

“I will definitely deal with pesticides differently, if I use them at all.”

“I look forward to serving the community in increasing people’s knowledge of gardening and protecting the environment.”

“I won’t weed and feed my lawn.”

“I had no idea how much it would change my life. I feel blessed to have become part of the community.”

“I will share what I learned—all of it—with neighbors, friends, etc. so that they can make use of it in decision-making.”

“I will try to use products not harmful to the environment.”

“This program is very well organized and provides many diverse opportunities to participate in promoting gardening practices in the community.”

“I am understanding better how horticulture and mother nature work together.”

“I came to Washington a stranger and through this program I have made so many good friends and have learned so much about Kitsap that it might have taken me years to learn.”

IMPACTS

42 citizens attended Kitsap Master Gardener Training, a 12 week program with online horticulture curriculum from WSU and 10 weeks of in class lectures on topics such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Gardening & Water Quality, and Plant Problem Diagnosis. Trainees are taught where to locate science-based resources with efficacious and safe pest control information to use at home and share with the public. 41 of those students went on to graduate as certified WSU Kitsap Master Gardeners. Certified Master Gardeners return to the trainings annually to earn required continuing education hours.

Post-certification evaluation indicated that all of Master Gardener Trainees (100%, 21 of 21 respondents) began new environmentally conscious natural resource and environmental stewardship practices or increased these practices since becoming a Master Gardener. All of the Master Gardener Trainees increased their knowledge through the MG program and 100% (21 of 21) indicated that participating in the MG Program improved their quality of life.

Kitsap Master Gardeners provided advice for homeowners at 269 regularly scheduled plant diagnostic clinics at 5 farmers market locations (Port Orchard, Bremerton, Poulsbo, Bainbridge Island, Kingston), our business office and other locations countywide. “Home Composting Made Easy”, “Natural Yard Care” and “Kick the Weed and Feed Habit” booklets are popular publications Master Gardeners reference and distribute to the public. A total of 5771 people received individualized help from MG volunteers and 3128 specific garden related questions were answered for citizens.

All the demonstration and community gardens MGs plan, manage and lovingly tend are maintained with organic methods to protect our water resources. Sustainable methods are on display at these gardens for citizens to adopt at home including composting demonstrations in partnership with Kitsap County Solid Waste. 114 individuals in total attended classes on the safe and proper use of pesticides from WSU and Master Gardeners. Kitsap Master Gardeners succeeded in coordinating 142 workshops, demonstrations and field days for adults and children that focused on stewardship of natural resources and environmental protection.

Visit our website for more information: http://kitsap.wsu.edu

WSU Kitsap Master Gardener Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/kitsapmastergardeners?ref=hl