DATE

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_NAME, TITLE, CONTACT INFO

For Immediate Release

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Master Gardeners celebrate the program's 50th anniversary**

(CITY), Wash. — \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County Extension Master Gardeners invite all current and past volunteers and friends to join them in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Extension Master Gardener Program.

Now an intercontinental volunteer movement, the master gardener phenomenon began right here in Washington, 50 years ago this spring, as part of Washington State University Extension.

(IF YOU HAVE A LOCAL CELEBRATION, PLEASE LIST IT HERE:

A local celebration will be held (TIME, DATE, at PLACE.) The event will include (a presentation, commemoration, light refreshments, a garden tour, etc.) Guests who would like to attend may RSVP to?

QUOTE from county program leader on the moment and call to action. SAMPLE, feel free to change/edit/personalize:

"For 50 years, Extension Master Gardener volunteers have shared their passion, effort, and knowledge for healthier, more beautiful communities," said \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, TITLE/county program leader. "Please join us in observing this incredible milestone as well as the many accomplishments of our amazing volunteers and partners."

Regional WSU-hosted gatherings are being held May 20, 2023, at the WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center (IAREC) at Prosser; June 10 at WSU’s Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center (TFREC) at Wenatchee; and July 13 at WSU’s Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center (NWREC) at Mount Vernon. An initial kick-off event and tree planting was held April 8 at Puyallup.

The celebration culminates with the WSU Master Gardener Advanced Education Conference, Sept. 27-30 at Tacoma, where attendees will mark the anniversary and learn the latest in gardening techniques, outreach, and discovery.

Master gardeners are Extension-trained volunteers who share information on horticulture and environmental stewardship with their communities through clinics, demonstration gardens, and local partnerships.

The first class of volunteers trained in spring 1973 in Washington's King and Pierce Counties. The movement quickly spread across the state, nationwide, and beyond. Today, master gardeners can be found in Canada, South Korea, and the United Kingdom.

In Washington, more than 4,000 master gardener volunteers provide over 330,000 hours of service annually, educating upwards of 300,000 of their neighbors while providing 60,000 pounds of fresh produce to local food banks. More than 100,000 master gardeners are active nationwide.

The Washington program is currently raising funds for its first-ever endowed faculty chair, who will develop new partnerships, tools, and curricula to help master gardeners become a more accessible, diverse resource.

To learn about your local Extension Master Program, get involved, or find out how to become a trained master gardener volunteer, visit \_\_\_(COUNTY WEBSITE)\_\_\_\_\_, or contact (TITLE) (NAME) at (PHONE) or (EMAIL).

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