Faulkner County Master Gardeners

Projects

Master Gardeners Stay Busy throughout the Year
With Projects that Benefit the Community

Landscape Projects • Education Committees • Administrative Projects

Faulkner County Master Gardener Landscape Projects

Faulkner County Courthouse

Around 1997, Master Gardeners worked with the County Judge's office to develop and implement a plan to refresh or replace old institutional plantings on the grounds of the Faulkner County Courthouse. Today Master Gardeners continue to maintain the plantings with scheduled workdays for weeding, pruning, planting and mulching. Master Gardeners have also been asked to provide input into plans for a possible renovation of the entire campus.

Faulkner County Courthouse - Juvenile Court

In 2009, Master Gardeners were asked to develop a plan and submit suggestions to the Judge for renovation of the beds at the Juvenile Court adjoining the Faulkner County Courthouse.

Faulkner County Libraries

Master Gardeners helped install landscape plantings soon after the main library in Conway was built. Since that time, our committee members have improved the beds to further our goal of demonstrating low maintenance and low water usage.

As branch libraries were opened in Greenbrier, Vilonia, and Mayflower, Master Gardeners helped design and install the landscape plantings for each of those sites with financial support from the Friends of the Library and Keep Faulkner County Beautiful organization. Today we continue to maintain these sites through scheduled workdays for cleanup, planting, and refreshing the beds.

Master Gardeners also work with community members in Twin Groves to maintain the gardens at the library.

Faulkner County Museum/Herb Garden

In 2002, a Master Gardener committee worked with the museum director to develop a plan for the beds at the museum and dog trot cabin on the courthouse grounds. The goal was to create a landscape that would be historically correct and require minimal
water and maintenance. The committee installed heirloom and period plants, including medicinal herbs and vegetables. Today Master Gardeners continue to maintain these sites through scheduled workdays for cleanup, planting, and refreshing the beds.

Legacy Gardens

Legacy Gardens, formerly known as “The Water Conservation Demonstration and Butterfly Gardens”, is on the campus of the Natural Resource Center (which houses the Faulkner County Extension Service Offices).

With a mandate and generous support from Conway Corporation, the primary mission of Legacy Gardens is to demonstrate garden planning and maintenance methods which conserve water. Our sprinkler system, donated and installed by Conway Corp., allows for the incorporation of a variety of irrigation techniques, enabling us to demonstrate watering methods that are site and plant specific.

Plant selection requirements emphasize plants that are drought-tolerant, low maintenance, and non-invasive. We also want to use as many cultivars of native Arkansas plants as possible. Several sections are dedicated butterfly gardens, but plants attractive to butterflies will be incorporated throughout the area.

Within the larger design we have incorporated garden sections that will allow homeowners and landscapers to see possible home garden layouts for specific garden concepts (e.g. a rose garden, a “formal” garden, a children's garden) and hardscape features such as seating, pathways and borders, and a low-maintenance fountain. A garden pergola, which will provide sheltered space for an outdoor “classroom”, is also planned.

The business community and the city of Conway and Faulkner County have been supportive and generous, as have been individual community members and Master Gardeners who have made substantial contributions to the garden.

The Legacy Gardens dedication will be held October 16 at 2:00 p.m. on the Natural Resource Center Campus, 110 S. Amity Road, Conway, Ark.

Mt. Vernon City Park

In 2001, Master Gardeners in the Mt. Vernon area were asked to work with community members to prepare, plant and help maintain beds of seasonal color at the city park. Master Gardeners continue to maintain the area today.

Natural Resource Center Building

In 2005, as ground was broken for the Master Gardener home, members with professional horticultural expertise began working with architects, contractors, and other tenants of the building to create a staged landscape plan for the entire campus. We completed foundation plantings in time for the building's grand opening in 2006 and continue to maintain the area.
Note: All Faulkner County Master Gardeners are expected to participate in planting and maintenance workdays for this, our "showcase," site.

Oak Grove Cemetery

Master Gardeners plant and maintain areas of seasonal color in Conway's historic cemetery.

Faulkner County Master Gardener Education Committees

Community Outreach

Frequently Master Gardeners are asked for advice from local businesses and organizations. These activities are one-time non-sanctioned projects, which are primarily consultations. The hours are recorded as miscellaneous.

Enrichment

This committee tracks skills, interests and expertise of our individual members in order to facilitate outreach presentations to our group as well as other members of our community. Depending upon the audience and the need, Master Gardeners may present workshops, seminars or one-time programs to schools and community organizations. Past topics have included "How to Plant Bulbs," "The Importance of Honey Bees," and "The Master Gardener Program."

Field Trip

Committee members research and recommend opportunities for gardening-related field trips. The committee also facilitates the trip, making reservations and planning transportation options.

Faulkner County Fair Education Booth

Master Gardeners plan and produce a display to educate the general public about basic gardening concepts. Recent topics have included "Butterfly Gardening," "Soil Test Results" and "Benefits of Mulch." Judged by such criteria as general interest, effectiveness of presentation, and accuracy of horticultural information, our booth has won county and regional awards over the past several years.

Faulkner County Fair Horticulture Division

Over a two day period in September, Master Gardeners assist the Extension Service staff with managing the variety of agricultural products to be judged at the annual Faulkner County Fair. Master Gardeners also serve as judges and award ribbons to the winners.
Fire Ant Abatement

Master Gardeners serve as a resource to the community in the effort to eradicate fire ants from our area. Members of this committee receive extra training about the danger fire ants present to public and private landscapes and work with the Extension Office and other experts to manage fire ant infestations. The committee offers on-site demonstrations as well as a variety of informative programs to community groups and individuals. They have also made educational videos available for check-out at all county libraries.

Floriculture Contest

Master Gardeners assist Conway High School agriculture teachers and FFA advisors in staging an annual "Floriculture Contest." This contest involves approximately 150 students from 30 high schools across the state. The contest is a two part, in-depth plant ID of 50 plant samples and a 50-question test of general horticultural knowledge. The committee constructs the test and assists in administering and scoring the results.

GardenWalk

Master Gardeners plan and present a public tour of residential gardens in Faulkner County. We recruit garden owner participants, offer our help in preparing the gardens for viewing, and serve as hosts/docents during the tours. This committee also develops the tour routes and handles ticket sales and publicity for the event.

Master Gardener Training

This committee recruits new Master Gardeners, plans the curriculum (adhering to the Arkansas Master Gardener Program Guidelines), and arranges and schedules the training sessions. Care is taken to secure interesting and competent presenters and to plan for as much hands-on learning experiences as possible.

To recruit new members, a "Meet the Master Gardeners" event occurs each year. This event shows prospective members the various aspects of the program and gives them an opportunity to ask questions. The entire membership supports this committee, assisting with the logistics, refreshments, and acting as mentors to the trainees.

Newsletter

Staff reporters track accomplishments of individual members as well as project activities in The Grapevine, an award-winning monthly newsletter. The mission of The Grapevine is to help all members get to know each other, to offer information about volunteer opportunities, and to inform the entire membership of all the activities of the organization. The staff members gather information and photos, write the copy, compose each issue, and meet monthly to proofread the current issue and plan for the next one.

Plant Sale
Master Gardeners plan and provide a spring plant sale. A sub-committee digs, gathers, and pots plants from a variety of sites (mostly fellow Master Gardeners' gardens). Members of other sub-committees provide logistics (transport the plants), set up the sale display, and assist shoppers on the day of the sale. Members also staff an information booth at the sale to answer horticultural questions and to offer information about the Master Gardener program.

Youth Garden

A Master Gardener committee works with the Oak Grove Commons staff and 4-H on a program that gives local youth experience in planting, maintaining and harvesting their own on-site garden. Our committee supervises these young gardeners during the summer and after school during the growing season. These youth also learn how to prepare and/or preserve their produce.

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**Faulkner County Master Gardener Administrative Projects**

**Communication**

This committee notifies members of Master Gardener activities through email announcements. A sub-committee relays the information to members who do not have email.

**Finance**

Master Gardeners who serve on this committee work with the treasurer to prepare an annual budget. The President appoints a subcommittee to audit the organization's funds.

**Grant Writing**

This committee reviews grant sources and assists with grant applications for Faulkner County projects. After a grant is awarded, the committee follows-up to see that grant requirements are met.

**Marketing/External Publicity**

Master Gardeners provide program publicity to local news outlets, including photographs, news releases, magazine articles, flyers, and street signs that promote Master Gardener projects and activities. They have also developed a regularly updated brochure and Power Point presentation for interested groups.

**Master Gardener Extension Office Support**

One of our most important missions is to staff our Master Gardener office and to assist the Extension Office Master Gardener advisor. Committee members also answer the
Master Gardener phone, research horticulture questions and supply information about the Master Gardener program to callers.

**Newsletter Production and Mailing**

This committee copies, collates and prepares *The Grapevine* for mailing to Master Gardener community supporters as well as members who do not receive the newsletter via email.

**Program**

This committee finds and arranges for speakers for nine general meetings held each year. (The summer social, new class graduation and year-end holiday socials do not require speakers.)

**Recordkeeping**

This committee tabulates and maintains the project, learning, and miscellaneous hours of each Faulkner County Master Gardener. The committee members advise individual members on how to report hours and resolve questions that arise. Reports are provided to the executive board and the Master Gardener advisor.

**Scholarship Committee**

This committee promotes Master Gardener scholarships that are granted annually. After the application deadline, the committee reviews and selects the recipients to be recommended to the Board and the general membership for final approval.

**Scrapbook**

This committee archives all major Master Gardener activities for the year. Scrapbooks from previous years are stored in the Master Gardener Room at the Cooperative Extension Office.

**Socials**

Committee members plan social events during the year and schedule refreshments for each meeting. They also return the facilities which are used to their previous conditions. These events promote fellowship and friendship among Master Gardener members.

**Sunshine**

This committee works with the Corresponding Secretary to send expressions of encouragement to Master Gardeners who are ill and sympathy cards to those who have lost a family member.

**Technical Support Team**
Committee members maintain a current inventory of AV equipment and recommend updates and/or additions. They also serve as internet technology assistants at monthly meetings, seminars, and training class sessions. In addition, they record class sessions, programs and horticultural information as DVDs or CDs that are made available for general use.