What/Who are Master Gardeners?

- Trained core of volunteers who assist County Extension Agents/Educators in Horticulture programming
- Began by Washington State University in 1971
- Currently >50,000 Master Gardeners active in US and Canada
What do Master Gardeners Do?

• Master Gardener program was never meant to be just a horticulture training program
• Assist County Agents/Educators
  – Demonstration gardens
  – Educational programs
  – Site visits
  – Answer questions (clinics/phones/Web)
• Community Service Projects
The Kentucky Master Gardener Program

- MG Organization
- MG Training
- Impact to Extension
Master Gardener Organization

• County Agent must coordinate the local program
  – Sets program schedule and theme
  – Determines volunteers needed
    • 30 hrs – initial certification
    • 20 hrs/year – continuing certification
  – Advanced MG training offered by some counties – requirement for answering questions
  – Costs range from $65-200
Recruitment

- Brochure: “Become a Kentucky Master Gardener”
- Mailing/waiting list
- Newspaper announcements
- Word-of-mouth
- Master Gardener events and activities
Master Gardener Training

• Core content (24 hours total)
  – Cooperative Extension and Volunteerism
  – Basic Botany
  – Soils and Fertility
  – Plant Pathology
  – Entomology
  – Pesticides and Safety

• Specialized training (according to county needs)
  – Ornamentals/Landscaping
  – Fruits and Vegetables

• Courses taught by county agents, specialists, local professionals

• Hands-on experiences (field trips and laboratories)
Impact of MG programs to Extension

- Impact data collection - 2003
- Master Gardener programs active in 26 counties in all regions of the state
- Around 1,250 Master Gardeners active
  - ~1000 veteran Master Gardeners active
  - ~250 new Master Gardeners trained
- 20,678 volunteer hours logged
  - At $15/hr = >$300,000
- Over 50,000 direct contacts with Extension clientele
Kentucky Master Gardener Projects

• Community Education
  – Demonstration Gardens
  – Information tables
  – Plant sales/exchanges
  – Mass media

• Community Service
  – Beautification of public space
  – Community gardens for at-risk youth
Kentucky Master Gardener Projects

- Large educational events
  - Garden Gurus
  - Partners in other events state-wide
- Educational programs in correctional facilities
  - Master Gardener training used for sills development
  - Participants report increased self-esteem
  - Food produced is used on site
Accessible Garden at Arboretum
Junior Master Gardeners

- Program for school-aged children
- Administered through Texas A&M University (www.jmgkids.us)
- Standardized curriculum and materials (including soils and water)
- Growing in popularity in Kentucky
Junior Master Gardener programs are now active in 5 counties.
Master Gardeners Nationwide

• USDA Leadership
  – Master Gardeners as a “front-lines” resource for addressing environmental issues
  – National framework for Master Gardener Coordinators being developed
  – Example – Sudden Oak Death - Ramorum Blight (*Phytophthora ramorum*)
PRED Training

**Phytophthora ramorum** Educate to Detect Training

Trains Master Gardeners as “front-line” detectors for Ramorum Blight

http://nature.berkeley.edu/comtf/
Master Gardeners and Water Quality

- Sustainable/healthy landscapes
- Several states have introduced water quality issues specifically into Master Gardener curricula
- Master Gardener projects starting to include subjects like rain gardens and rain barrels
- Regional training of Master Gardener Coordinators
Successfully Engaging Master Gardeners

• **Provide educational resources**
  – Fact sheets
  – PowerPoint presentations coordinators’ use in training

• **Joint projects or integration of concepts into existing demonstrations**
  – Water gardens
  – Rain barrels
  – Train them to teach others

• **Sustain engagement**
  – Joint ownership of project
  – Grants
  – Feedback (2-way)
  – Share impact data
Master Gardener Programs

www.ahs.org/master_gardeners/index.htm