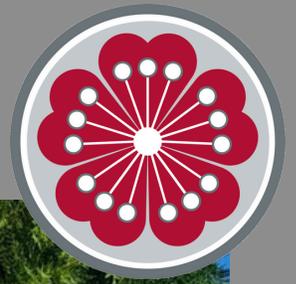


Washington State University
Extension Master Gardener Program



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



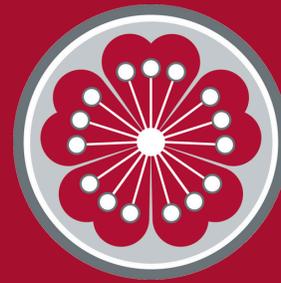
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.

Rooted in Community

2024 WSU Extension

Master Gardener Program Impacts



The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program plays a vital role in building a resilient Washington by educating communities on sustainable gardening, climate adaptation, and ecosystem stewardship. As part of Washington State University's College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS), the program empowers individuals to make environmentally sound choices that strengthen landscapes and communities. In 2024, we continue evolving to meet community needs, ensuring accessible, science-based education for all.

Volunteers are at the heart of this mission, addressing critical issues such as pollinator health, climate resilience, and food security while strengthening natural resource conservation efforts. As we look ahead, we embrace technical innovation and collaborative learning to adapt to a changing world. With strong leadership, volunteer dedication, and the support of our communities, we are poised to grow and thrive—continuing to make a lasting impact for future generations.

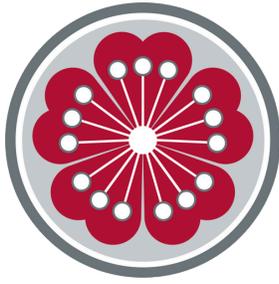


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This report is available in
accessible format at:
mastergardener.wsu.edu



Cultivating plants, people, and communities since 1973

As a **Land Grant University**, Washington State University (WSU) has responsibilities to teach, research, and extend knowledge to all people. The Extension Master Gardener Program, launched in 1973 by WSU, is one way that land-grant universities fulfill those purposes. The success of the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program has led to the replication of the program across the United States and internationally with over 100,000 master gardeners serving their communities.



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

BY THE NUMBERS

3,079

Certified volunteers.

570

New volunteers trained.

318,134

Hours were dedicated by volunteers to WSU and the communities they serve.

43,223

Continuing education hours earned by volunteers.

3,163

Ask a Master Gardener PLANT CLINICS offered across the state.

49,453

Research-based answers provided on various topics aligned with our nine program priorities.

BY THE NUMBERS

1,718

ADULT CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, and FIELD DAYS to share knowledge and promote sustainable practices.

623

YOUTH CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, and FIELD DAYS, where volunteers provided research-based gardening education, fostering healthy eating habits, environmental stewardship, and vital life skills.

17,769

Youth and adult **ATTENDEES** gained valuable insights into gardening practices grounded in research.

11,515

QUESTIONS answered at plant clinics on growing food, providing valuable guidance to gardeners and growers.

26%

Improvement in understanding how to **SELECT** suitable plant varieties for cultivation in my area.

23%

Boost in knowledge about **GROWING** fruits and vegetables their family likes to eat.

14%

Increase in understanding of the connection between access to local food and individual and community **HEALTH** and **WELLNESS**.

11%

Increased recognition that **ACCESS** to nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables enhances both individual and community health.

20%

Enhancement in understanding ways to promote and support **FOOD SECURITY** in their communities.

Local Food

The Extension Master Gardener Program in Washington State directly impacted food growing and security practices among **17,769** individuals. This led to increased engagement of community members in growing food and donating produce to local food banks and pantries. The program donated **167,229** pounds of produce, valued at **\$361,215**. This made nutrient-dense foods easily accessible locally, feeding **429** households for a year.



BY THE NUMBERS

1,627 **ADULT** CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, and FIELD DAYS focused on pollinator diversity, examining the impact of human activities like pesticide use, habitat destruction, air and light pollution, and invasive species on pollinator well-being.

459 **YOUTH** CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, and FIELD DAYS, where participants learned pollinator health and habitat conservation practices.

11,454 Youth and adult **ATTENDEES** gained a deeper understanding of pollinators' roles in ecosystems and their significance in food production.

3,205 **QUESTIONS** answered on pollinator health and habitat at **Ask a Master Gardener** plant clinics.

21% Developed a deeper understanding of pollinators' role in **NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS** and **FOOD PRODUCTION**.

22% Increased awareness of pollinator diversity and the importance of plant-animal relationships for **RESILIENCE**.

14% Improved knowledge of selecting **ALTERNATIVES** to chemical pesticides to protect pollinators.

13% Gained an understanding of the benefits of replacing traditional lawns with pollinator-friendly **LANDSCAPING**.

32% Gained confidence in providing essential **HABITAT** for local pollinators.

Pollinator Health

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program directly impacts pollinator health and conservation by teaching sustainable gardening practices that protect and restore vital habitats.

Through science-based education and hands-on community engagement, the program empowers individuals to create pollinator-friendly landscapes, ensuring stable food production and biodiversity preservation. By supporting native plant growth, advocating for pesticide alternatives, and reducing environmental stressors, Master Gardeners actively strengthen pollinator populations, safeguard essential ecosystem services, and drive long-term environmental resilience.



BY THE NUMBERS

1,033 **ADULT** CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, and FIELD DAYS educating participants on soil properties and their influence on home landscapes and environmental sustainability.

499 **YOUTH** CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, and FIELD DAYS, engaging youth in learning experiences equipping them with the knowledge to make informed, sustainable choices for the future.

8,700 Youth and adult **ATTENDEES** developed greater awareness of soil threats, such as pollution, erosion, and overuse, and the importance of conservation efforts.

6,114 **QUESTIONS** answered at plant clinics on soil health and sustainability.

33% Gained awareness of basic **SOIL PROPERTIES**—physical, chemical, and biological—and their impact on the home landscape.

30% Developed an understanding of why **FERTILIZER** application should be based on soil test results.

28% Learned why **NO-TILL** techniques are a best practice for home gardening.

31% Recognized how home **COMPOSTING** helps reduce methane emissions from landfills.

35% Improved knowledge of appropriate organic **MULCHING** techniques.

32% Strengthened understanding of proper composting **METHODS** for yard and kitchen waste.

Soil Health

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program directly impacts communities by providing science-based education that improves soil health, strengthens ecosystems, and promotes sustainable gardening practices. Through hands-on workshops, field demonstrations, and personalized guidance, Master Gardeners empower individuals to adopt techniques that prevent erosion, enhance soil fertility, and sustain long-term productivity. Their outreach has led to measurable improvements—such as increased knowledge of soil conservation, better land stewardship, and stronger local food systems. By actively engaging with residents, Master Gardeners ensure that communities have the tools and knowledge to create healthier landscapes, resilient ecosystems, and sustainable gardens for future generations.



BY THE NUMBERS

566 **ADULT** CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, and FIELD DAYS teaching research-backed techniques empowering gardeners to build sustainable, climate-resilient landscapes.

282 **YOUTH** CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, and FIELD DAYS, provided hands-on science-based gardening education, empowering young learners to understand climate resilience and sustainability.

3,962 Youth and adult **ATTENDEES** expanded their knowledge of sustainable gardening practices and the impact of climate change on home landscapes, gaining insight into conservation strategies that support resilient gardens.

2,830 **QUESTIONS** answered at plant clinics on actionable climate solutions.

22% Gained a deeper understanding of how climate change **AFFECTS** the environment, ecosystem functioning, and human health.

27% Increased awareness of strategies to enhance landscape **RESILIENCE** in response to climate change.

23% Developed knowledge of the significant **IMPACT** urbanization has on climate change.

22% Recognized how climate change disproportionately **AFFECTS** marginalized and underrepresented communities.

22% Learned effective **STRATEGIES** for offsetting carbon emissions and reducing greenhouse gas pollution.

Climate Change

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program directly impacts communities' efforts to combat climate change by teaching sustainable landscaping practices. Volunteers educate residents on strategies that reduce carbon footprints, minimize pollution, and lower greenhouse gas emissions. By conserving water, improving soil health, and supporting biodiversity, these practices create resilient landscapes that act as carbon sinks, absorbing and storing carbon dioxide. Through hands-on education, the program empowers communities to contribute to a cleaner environment and a more sustainable future.



BY THE NUMBERS

759 **ADULT AND YOUTH CLASSES**, WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, and FIELD DAYS focusing on pesticide safety, proper use, and IPM principles.

3,227 Youth and adult **ATTENDEES** expanded their knowledge of the importance of clean water and how gardening decisions impact water quality.

3,650 **QUESTIONS** answered on the least toxic pest control methods at **Ask a Master Gardener** plant and insect clinics.

20% Gained a deeper understanding of how clean water directly **IMPACTS** human health, local wildlife, and natural ecosystems.

17% Increased understanding of how human activity intensifies **THREATS** to water resources.

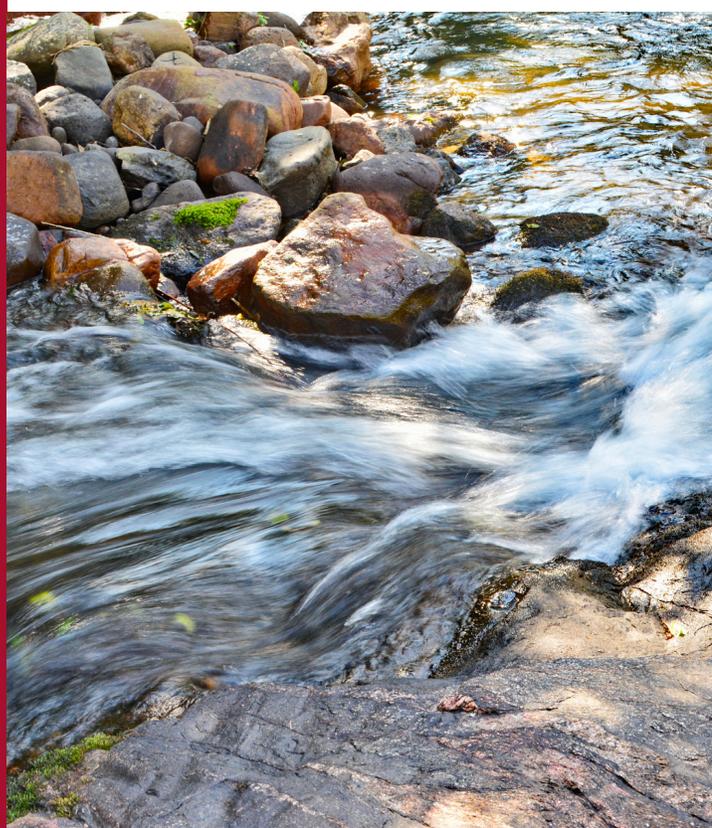
7% Participants gained a clearer understanding of their personal **RESPONSIBILITY** in preventing pollutants from entering waterways.

27% Gained a deeper understanding of gardening **TECHNIQUES** that enhance water quality.

73% **COMMITTED** to practicing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and employing sustainable gardening techniques to minimize chemical inputs.

Clean Water

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program directly improves public health and environmental sustainability by educating communities on clean water practices that safeguard local ecosystems. Through science-based outreach and hands-on demonstrations, volunteers empower individuals to reduce harmful chemicals, enhance water quality, and protect vital waterways. Their efforts seek to lower municipal costs for water treatment and healthcare while fostering environmental stewardship and a deeper connection to local water systems. By promoting sustainable water management, Master Gardeners help ensure clean, accessible water for future generations.



BY THE NUMBERS

621 **ADULT AND YOUTH** CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, and **FIELD DAYS** focusing on water-saving strategies for home landscapes.

3,362 Youth and adult **ATTENDEES** learned the importance of conserving water and its role in supporting people, agriculture, and ecosystems.

3,650 **QUESTIONS** answered on water conservation at **Ask a Master Gardener** plant clinics, helping gardeners adopt efficient practices.

26% Improved understanding of how water conservation **BENIFITS** people, agriculture, and the environment.

31% Gained understanding of how home landscapes **IMPACT** the local watershed and water quality.

31% Improved understanding of how individual landscapes **INFLUENCE** water availability and conservation.

27% Improved understanding of key water conservation **PRINCIPLES** and their impact on sustainability.

28% Learned ways to **CONSERVE** water through specific, sustainable techniques.

75% **COMMITTED** to adapting their home landscape to local conditions to conserve water.

Water Conservation

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program drives lasting environmental stewardship by equipping communities with science-based water conservation practices that safeguard public health, protect ecosystems, and ensure the sustainability of local water resources. Through education, outreach, and hands-on demonstrations, volunteers provide individuals with the knowledge and tools to reduce pollution, improve water quality, and strengthen resilience against environmental challenges. Their efforts seek to lower municipal costs, enhance local water systems, and foster a culture of sustainability, ensuring that clean, accessible water remains available for future generations.



BY THE NUMBERS

1,037 **ADULT AND YOUTH** CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, and FIELD DAYS centered on exploring and understanding nearby nature.

13,154 Youth and adult **ATTENDEES** developed essential knowledge and skills in sustainable horticulture to support and enrich nearby nature.

10,592 **QUESTIONS** answered at **Ask a Master Gardener** plant clinics about nearby nature, helping communities better understand and appreciate their local environment.

30% Enhanced understanding of the benefits of **ENGAGING** with nature at both individual landscape and broader community levels.

26% Greater recognition of the role a home landscape plays in **SUPPORTING** the local ecosystem.

25% Increased awareness of shared green spaces and green infrastructure as valuable community resources, along with the **RESPONSIBILITY** of individuals in safeguarding their benefits.

29% Improved knowledge of how to **OPTIMIZE** the advantages of nature in the home landscape through thoughtful design, plant selection, and maintenance.

30% Strengthened ability to **SELECT** the right plant for the right location to promote sustainability and resilience.

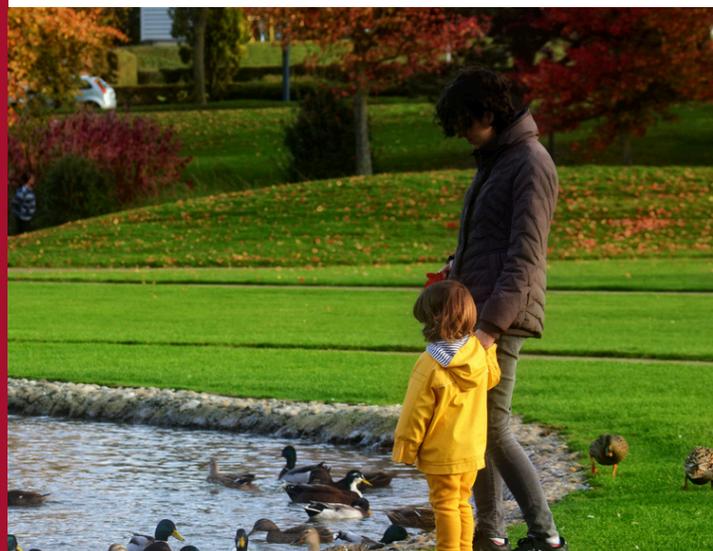
59% **COMMITTED** to spending more time outdoors.

Nearby Nature

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program directly impacts community health by equipping individuals and families with science-based education that fosters physical and mental well-being, strengthens social connections, and builds resilient landscapes.

Research shows that being in nature reduces stress, lowers the risk of cardiovascular disease, and improves cognitive function.

Through hands-on workshops and outreach, Master Gardeners empower individuals to create pollinator-friendly landscapes, urban gardens, and sustainable green spaces that reduce pollution, manage stormwater, and mitigate the urban heat island effect. These efforts improve air and water quality, and provide essential spaces for recreation and relaxation, ensuring that communities continue to benefit from nature's health advantages for generations to come.



BY THE NUMBERS

2,560

ADULT AND YOUTH CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, and FIELD DAYS educating about the significance of biodiversity and invasive species management..

9,082

Youth and adult **ATTENDEES** gained a comprehensive understanding of biodiversity and invasive species management, equipping them with practical strategies to support ecosystem health in their communities.

8,527

QUESTIONS answered at **Ask a Master Gardener** plant clinics provided valuable insights into plant biodiversity.

21%

Improved understanding of the **VITAL ROLE** plant biodiversity plays in human health and well-being.

22%

Greater awareness of the actions individuals can take to **PROTECT** plant biodiversity, including reporting and removing invasive species, replacing lawns, and supporting native plant growth.

19%

Enhanced knowledge of how invasive species negatively **IMPACT** ecosystems, agriculture, and infrastructure.

19%

Deeper recognition of human **INFLUENCE** on species biodiversity and the ways individuals can contribute to conservation efforts.

84%

COMMITTED to removing invasive plants in their home landscapes.

Plant Biodiversity

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program drives lasting environmental impact by equipping communities with science-based knowledge and practical strategies to cultivate plant biodiversity and invasive species management. Through volunteer-led education, the program empowers individuals to restore native habitats, support pollinators, and enhance soil health, ensuring resilient ecosystems that sustain local food production and public health.

These efforts may lead to measurable behavior change, with participants adopting sustainable gardening practices that reduce chemical inputs, improve water conservation, and strengthen biodiversity.



BY THE NUMBERS

382 **ADULT AND YOUTH CLASSES**, WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, and FIELD DAYS educating about the significance of biodiversity and invasive species management..

1,144 Youth and adult **ATTENDEES** gained a comprehensive understanding of biodiversity and invasive species management, equipping them with practical strategies to support ecosystem health in their communities.

672 **QUESTIONS** answered at **Ask a Master Gardener** plant clinics helped community members understand how to establish defensible space around their homes.

30% Improved understanding of wildland fires in Washington state, including their role in native ecosystems, the heightened risks in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), and the broader community costs and **IMPACTS** of wildfire.

27% Greater awareness of individual **RESPONSIBILITY** in fire risk reduction and prevention within home and community landscapes.

41% Increased ability to **IDENTIFY** 'defensible space' and distinguish between different zones of fire defense.

35% Learned how to **CREATE** a fire-defensible landscape, including assessing ignition risks of materials and understanding zones of risk and defense.

75% **COMMITTED** to develop a landscape plan, incorporating fire risk.

Wildfire Preparedness

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program improves wildfire resilience by equipping communities with science-based education on defensible space creation and vegetation management. Volunteers empower individuals to implement fire-resistant landscaping practices that protect homes, reduce wildfire risks, and safeguard local ecosystems. These efforts drive behavior change, with residents adopting strategies that minimize fuel loads, enhance emergency preparedness, and mitigate environmental and economic risks. By fostering a culture of proactive wildfire prevention, the Extension Master Gardener Program creates safer, more sustainable communities, ensuring long-term resilience against increasing wildfire threats.



BY THE NUMBERS

A survey was conducted among conference attendees following the 2024 virtual advanced education conference to evaluate the percentage of knowledge gained across the nine program priorities of the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program.

Pollinators: Attendees reported a **45%** increase in understanding of the essential role pollinators play in ecosystems and strategies to protect their habitats.

Nearby Nature: Knowledge grew by **35%**, improving awareness of the benefits of accessible green spaces and methods to enhance local biodiversity.

Wildfire Preparedness: Attendees gained **31%** more knowledge on creating fire-defensible landscapes and implementing fire-resistant gardening techniques.

Plant Biodiversity: Insights into conserving diverse plant species and integrating native plants into sustainable gardens improved by **28%**.

Water Conservation: Understanding of water-saving techniques, such as efficient irrigation and drought-resistant plants, expanded by **33%**.

Local Food: Attendees improved comprehension of sustainable food-growing practices and the value of local food systems by **25%**.

Climate Change: Knowledge of climate-smart gardening practices to reduce environmental impact increased by **26%**.

Soil Health: Attendees expanded their expertise by **36%** in soil testing, fertilization, and methods to improve soil structure and fertility.

Clean Water: Understanding of practices to prevent water pollution, including responsible gardening and pest management, grew by **35%**.

Master Gardener Skills: Confidence in leadership and the ability to educate communities in sustainable, research-based gardening practices increased by **35%**.



Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State

Advanced Education Rooted in Research

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program's advanced education equips volunteers with the expertise to deliver accurate guidance, champion sustainable horticulture, and educate communities on diverse gardening practices.

The [WSU Extension Master Gardener Advanced Education Conference](#) underscores the program's commitment to continuous learning, providing volunteers with the latest science-based gardening knowledge. By fostering leadership skills, the program expands its outreach and impact, strengthening its ability to cultivate a knowledgeable, engaged, and environmentally responsible gardening community that supports long-term sustainability.



mglearns.org

BY THE NUMBERS

7,461 Podcast **DOWNLOADS** and **LISTENS**

440 Extension Master Gardener Program Volunteer **HOURS** contributed to podcast production.

9 Extension Master Gardener Program Volunteers from 6 Washington counties, alongside other gardening experts, collaborated to **DEVELOP** content.

Top 5 Episodes

1. Protecting Our Pollinators (Episode 16)
2. Spring Vegetable Gardening (Episode 18)
3. Tomato Tips for Washington (Episode 27)
4. Soil Carbon Sequestration (Episode 14)
5. Seed Saving Secrets (Episode 31)

Average Listens by Program Priorities

- **Pollinators:** 358
- **Nearby Nature:** 285
- **Wildfire Preparedness:** 270
- **Plant Biodiversity:** 316
- **Water Conservation:** 293
- **Local Food:** 353
- **Climate Change:** 316
- **Soil Health:** 332
- **Clean Water:** 297



A Year of Growth and Impact

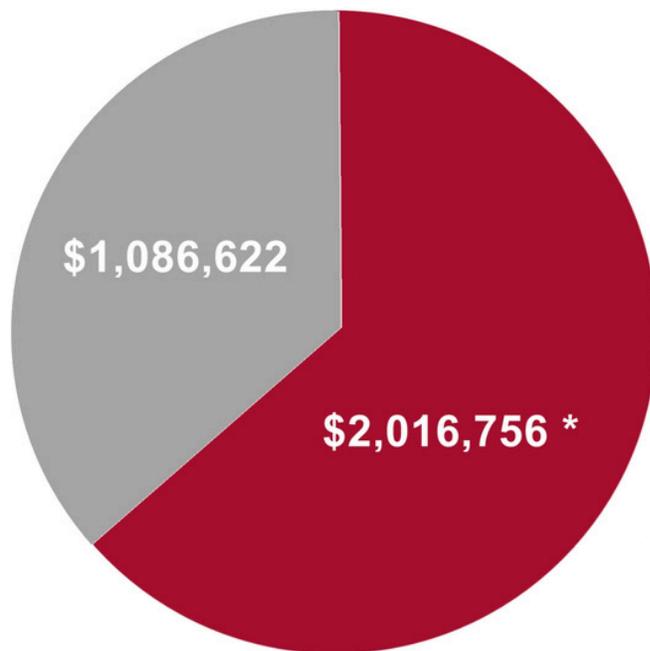
Launched in July 2023, The Evergreen Thumb Podcast connects communities with expert gardening and environmental stewardship insights. Produced by WSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers and supported by the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State, the podcast empowers listeners with science-based knowledge to promote sustainable practices, enhance biodiversity, and build resilient landscapes. By fostering informed decision-making, it strengthens environmental awareness and cultivates a more sustainable future for individuals and communities alike.



evergreenthumb.mastergardenerfoundation.org

SUPPORTING LASTING IMPACTS

Financial support for the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program (estimated)



- WSU paid salaries and benefits, goods and services, travel, administrative fees *
- Foundation sponsored Program support

*This amount excludes support from various WSU programs, facilities, and resources, including CAHNRS IT, CAHNRS Marketing, PREP, the Integrated Pest Management Team, AOI, and the value of office space, equipment, and land for demonstration gardens.

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program receives funding from multiple sources, including USDA-NIFA, Washington State University, county governments, grants, service fees, donor contributions, and the generosity of Master Gardener Foundations. This financial support enables the program to maintain faculty and staff positions, covering salaries, benefits, goods and services, travel, and administrative costs. WSU alone provides over \$2 million annually to sustain the program, supporting 13 full-time equivalent positions, 11 half-time roles, and 41 partial appointments.

Beyond direct funding, the program benefits from additional resources such as office space, equipment, and land for demonstration gardens provided by WSU. Ancillary support also comes from CAHNRS IT, CAHNRS Marketing and Communications, the Pesticide Resource and Education Program (PREP), and the WSU Integrated Pest Management Team, which contribute to essential training and education efforts. The Master Gardener Foundations further bolster the program by funding educational outreach, volunteer recognition, and general operations, ensuring continued impact in communities across Washington.