



**Kitsap
County**

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



KITSAP MASTER GARDENER 2016

BY THE NUMBERS

- 285 certified WSU Kitsap Master Gardener volunteers
- 45 new Master Gardener volunteers trained
- 18,839 volunteer hours reported
- National volunteer hourly rate used to calculate more than 1/2 a million dollars in labor savings for Kitsap County
- 6189 people received individualized help from MGs with 2250 specific questions answered.
- MG volunteer educators lead & coordinate 1 community garden and 4 demonstration gardens
- 124 people take series of 5 Organic Vegetable Gardening classes taught by 5 MG volunteer educators
- 3203 pounds of produce donated to foodbanks
- 1204 Youth learned and implemented gardening practices
- 100 percent of the 32 Kitsap MGs employed in the landscape/nursery/small farms industry are applying skills they learned with MGs to their livelihoods
- A majority of 2016 MG trainees surveyed (59%) 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 more 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, spreading from most counties in Washington to the entire United States and abroad. 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 conservation information. 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.



QUOTES

COMMENTS FROM NEW MASTER GARDENER TRAINEES:

"Thank you for a life changing program. I am excited to continue to learn and serve the community"

"Appreciating the impact bees have on our gardens. Will not use pesticides anymore."

"I am encouraged to better stewardship of our family's adjoining properties along Barker Creek. We have many habitats and I am fairly certain, many areas which need to be managed better. This was inspiring."

"I didn't know a lot about the program going in and I have been very pleased to join a great group of people, doing amazing work throughout the county. It is such a healthy and fulfilling way for me to satisfy my ever present desire to 'give back'."

"I will try all other methods of pest management before resorting to chemicals."

"Will never look or think about the natural world the same way again...I am growing new eyes!"

"I love the integrated pest management concept. It really will change my personal practices and recommendations at the clinics."

IMPACTS

50 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. 45 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%, 34 of 34 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 91% (31 of 34) indicated that participating in the MG Program improved their quality of life.

Kitsap Master Gardeners provided advice for homeowners at 295 regularly scheduled plant diagnostic clinics at 4 farmers market locations (Port Orchard, Bremerton, Poulsbo, Bainbridge Island, Kingston) and our business office in downtown Bremerton. "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 6189 people received individualized help from MG volunteers and 3295 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. 120 individuals in total attended classes on the safe and proper use of pesticides from WSU and Master Gardeners. Kitsap Master Gardeners succeeded in coordinating 168 workshops, demonstrations and field days that focused on stewardship of natural resources and environmental protection.