



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Hardin County Extension News Release

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Hardin Co. Master Gardeners Win State Awards

Hardin County – The Hardin County OSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteers (MGV) brought back two state awards from the Ohio MGV Conference held September 16-17 at Cuyahoga Falls near Akron. ‘The Rose Garden in the Friendship Gardens’ was recognized as state winner for the Integrated Pest Management Outstanding MGV Project award category at this annual conference. Also, the Hardin County group was recognized as a platinum ‘Standards of Excellence’ award winner.

The award winning Rose Garden at the Friendship Gardens of Hardin County was designed and planted to help the average gardener grow roses that would thrive for them. The Master Gardeners attempted to demonstrate a method to allow homeowners to be successful rose growers, using a minimal spray and fertilization program to free up the gardeners to enjoy the beauty of the roses they grow. As a result of this successful project, the local group was awarded the top state Outstanding MGV Project award for medium-sized Master Gardener Volunteer groups. The MGV group studied the Earth-Kind technique used by Texas A&M and based trials on that model.

The key to the demonstration rose garden began with soil preparation. The soil had been compacted, which required digging the soil deeper to add the amendments and remove standing water, as roses cannot have poor drainage. Working from the Earth-Kind standards, selections consisted of shrubs, floribundas, grandifloras, and hybrid teas. The plants were planted bare-root in the compost amended soil with an addition of bone meal. These plants were watered for the first year, not adding fertilizer or pesticide sprays. The roses are now watered by automated irrigation system, and are fed by slow release fertilizer applied only in

the spring of each year. A fall spray has been applied to help reduce disease and insect pressure on the plants.

In addition to winning this state award, the Hardin County Master Gardener Volunteers were recognized with the platinum 'Standards for Excellence' distinction. This is the highest degree of accomplishment for a county Master Gardener Volunteer program, based on guidelines set up by the Ohio State University Extension. Local nominations for Outstanding Master Gardener Volunteer and Friend of MGV were also submitted for statewide recognition.

Master Gardener Barb Snyder was nominated by the local group as Hardin County's Outstanding Master Gardener Volunteer for 2016. As an Ohio State University MGV, Barb Snyder has fully embraced the educational mission. She has become a vocal representative for care of the environment and in particular, the bees. Barb is a regular invitee to her local school, Ridgemont Elementary and High School, where she has helped with the landscape of their new school, vetted projects on Food Deserts for the FFA students, and presented a program on the Asian Longhorned Beetle for Earth Day. She was instrumental in the design of the Herb Garden in the Friendship Gardens of Hardin County. She oversaw the design and maintenance and gives tours about the garden to local groups. She uses her MGV training and educational research ability in serving on her local Mt. Victory Tree Commission.

Hardin County's nomination for this year's Friend of MGV award was Tom and Alice Roof. The Roofs have donated support to the local program by helping to develop the demonstration and educational garden, The Friendship Gardens of Hardin County, a learning experience for all ages. In addition to being vocal supporters, they personally donated the drilling of a well, the pump to draw water from the well, and an in-ground irrigation system to help with the maintenance of the plantings. While their direct involvement was for a short time, they continue to support the program within the community.

Attached photo caption – Hardin County OSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator Dave McPheron accepts the state award for the Outstanding MGV Integrated Pest Management Project from State Coordinator Pam Bennett.