



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 three state awards from the Ohio MGV Conference held November 8 at the Nationwide & Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center in Columbus. The spring gardening seminar ‘Go Native’ was recognized as both the state winner for the Environmental Horticulture Outstanding MGV Project award category for medium sized groups as well as the overall Outstanding MGV Project for medium sized groups at this annual conference. With these awards, the group brought back to the county both \$100 and \$500 stipends to be used for programming efforts. In addition, the Hardin County group was recognized as a platinum ‘Standards of Excellence’ award winner.

“Go Native!” was an Educational program presented in Kenton to reach both Master Gardener Volunteers and homeowners with the importance of including native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants in their landscapes. Given the unpredictability of Ohio weather, questions regarding wildlife habitat, challenges of pest control, and cost of plant material; the value of native plant use in the local landscape was a timely topic.

The main goal with the project was to introduce the 15-county audience attending to a new way to view native plants and their importance to our landscapes and the native wildlife around us. Michele Banker from the Marianist Environmental Education Center in Dayton presented the first topic. She answered the question “Why should I use Natives?” Her talk was focused around how native plants work together in a community, stressing that many plants share similar requirements, and therefore, could be planted together in sites that match those needs.

Charles Gleaves from the Kingwood Center in Mansfield, then presented a talk on how to integrate native perennials into plantings within a formal and/or homeowner landscape. Ed Karpraly of Riverside Native Trees located in Delaware, shared a presentation that excited the crowd. He spoke directly to planting native trees for Ohio Native Butterflies and Moths. He shared information on how different

species of trees are larval host plants for the young of these insects. His jump off quote was “If you grow it, they will come.” The group was particularly intrigued with the giant silk moths.

The final speaker was Dr. Dan Struve, Professor Emeritus, The Ohio State University and owner of Quail Ridge Specimen Trees in Oregonia. He presented “The Problem(s) with Natives, Challenges and Solutions for Native Plant Production.” Since his teaching career was focused on plant propagation, he shared with us the how to produce our own native plants from locally collected seed sources. He stated that many times a locally produced seedling of a native tree will out-grow a nursery produced plant, since the plant was grown from a local native source, thus being genetically adapted to the local conditions and soil.

In addition to winning these state awards, 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 MGVs were also submitted for statewide recognition.

Master Gardener Carol McKinley was nominated by the local group as Hardin County’s Outstanding Master Gardener Volunteer for 2019. McKinley has focused on education her whole career. She has been a teacher in the Kenton City School system. This has allowed her to use those tools she has to benefit the Hardin County Master Gardener program. Carol has presented programs on Monarch Butterflies. Her educational outreach extended well into our community.

Carol McKinley was invited to be the speaker at the Keep Hardin County Beautiful annual meeting, to present to the Kenton Rotary, to teach the program to the 2nd grade classes at Kenton Elementary School, and to present one of the Hardin County MGV Saturday in the Garden programs held at the Friendship Gardens of Hardin County. The Saturday program reached both adults and children with Monarch butterfly excitement. McKinley continued her teaching by designing a display of live Monarch caterpillars for the county fair, providing detailed instructions on rearing and releasing of the Monarch butterflies that resulted. Since the Hardin County Fair is held after Labor Day, the butterflies were tagged and released to begin their trip to Mexico to overwinter.

Hardin County’s nomination for this year's Friend of MGV were Jim and Sandy Pruden. They have been a true friend to the OSUE Hardin County Master Gardener Volunteer program. Even though Sandy was a part of the initial training class in 2002, she and Jim have gone far above the role of a Master Gardener Volunteer. The Prudens have given of their finances to help with the completion of the shelter house at the Friendship Gardens of Hardin County, the Master Gardener display, and the educational garden. In doing so, they have allowed use of the facility in poor weather by providing funds which allowed the walls to be enclosed if rain or windy conditions are occurring when a program is scheduled. The facility is frequently used by local garden clubs and the developmental disability school which is located next to the garden. The Prudens have also provided signs to indicate the location of the gardens and to guide participants to local outreach events. Jim and Sandy are involved in many community organizations and

have provided a very positive outreach representing The Ohio State University Extension Master Gardener Volunteer program.

Attached photo caption – The Hardin County OSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteers (MGV) were recognized for their “Go Native” Outstanding MG V Project for both the Environmental Horticulture category and overall medium group division at the 2019 State MG V Conference held in Columbus.