



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Hardin County Extension News Release

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Master Gardeners Growing for Hardin County

By Mark Badertscher

Hardin County – Local OSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteers have been putting their skills to work to assist the residents of Hardin County through the Grow Ohio program. Grow Ohio is a statewide program being conducted by The Ohio State University Extension Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) to help provide produce to local charities to distribute to families in need. Since 2016, Ohio MGVs have donated over 200,000 pounds of produce as part of this program. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, many families have become food insecure and Master Gardeners are busy planting vegetables in their own gardens to provide extra produce to these families who may be in need of food.

Locally, Hardin County OSU Extension Master Gardener President Stewart Coats challenged the Hardin County volunteers to step up their efforts to produce extra fruits and vegetables to help with the goal of alleviating food insecurity in the area. Last year, Hardin County MGVs produced and donated 850 pounds of produce to local charities. 197 pounds of these vegetables came from the educational Friendship Gardens of Hardin County located off West Kohler Street in Kenton. This garden grows vegetables using raised beds, elevated disability capable trugs, and vertical planters. In addition to providing fresh produce, these gardens are used to provide educational programs throughout the summer related to gardening.

In 2019, Ohio Master Gardener Volunteers contributed more than 165,000 hours of service to their local communities with an economic impact of over \$4 million in services to their local communities. There are currently 3301 active MGVs in Ohio with 400 new MGVs trained in 2019. Hardin County MGVs contributed 2010 total volunteer hours this past year with 482 continuing education hours. They have made an economic impact of over \$52,000 to their county through their volunteer efforts. There are currently 27 active MGVs in Hardin County. If a local resident is interested in finding out more information about becoming a Hardin County OSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer, they can contact Mark Badertscher at badertscher.4@osu.edu or call 419-767-6037.

Photo caption: Hardin County Master Gardener Volunteer Stewart Coats and Francine Craig look over the fruits of their labor from the raised beds in the Friendship Gardens of Hardin County produced during the 2017 growing season.