Extension Snapshot
Master Gardener Volunteers in Peoria County Make a Difference

University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners are a special group of people who all have a common interest – a love of gardening and the desire to share that knowledge with others. The program aim is to give intensive horticultural training to individuals who will, in turn, "Help Others Learn to Grow."
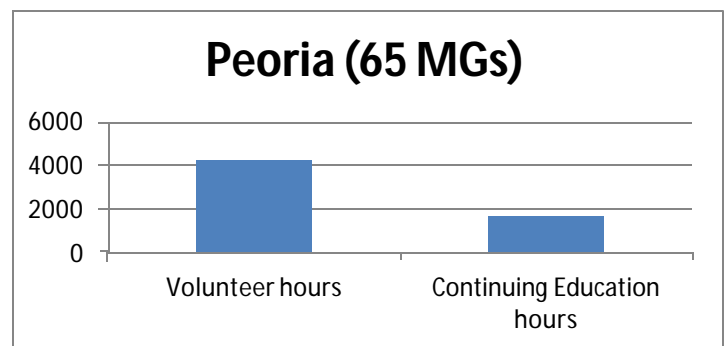

Master Gardener volunteers (MGs) are a tremendous resource for improving the quality of life in their communities. Examples of their work include:

- helping local citizens find sound management practices for home and urban natural resources,
- creating aesthetically pleasing environments,
- promoting well-being through people-plant interactions and horticultural therapy, and
- contributing to a safe, abundant food supply through home fruit and vegetable production.

Peoria County has a successful Master Gardener volunteer program. In 2010, they contributed 4,251 hours to their communities. The value of their volunteer service is worth more than $88,633 (using an estimated dollar value of volunteer time of $20.85 per hour as calculated by Independent Sector).

Volunteer work done by Peoria County Master Gardeners impact a wide diversity of people and communities and include:

- Clientele Assistance (answer gardening questions)
- Community Beautification Projects
- Speakers Bureau (various presentations)
- Illinois Central College Demonstration Gardens
- Bel-Wood Therapy Gardens
- PARC Enabling Garden
- Plant Sale Fundraiser
- Greenway Project
- Luthy Botanical Gardens
- Junior Master Gardeners

Peoria (65 MGs)

For more information about the Master Gardener programs in the Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Extension unit, including MG training in 2012, please go to http://web.extension.illinois.edu/fmpt/mg/ or contact Rhonda Ferree, extension educator in horticulture (ferreer@illinois.edu), or Julia Pryor, program coordinator (jpryor@illinois.edu). Rhonda and Julia are located in the Havana office at 309-543-3308.

October 2011