



Christian County Master Gardeners 2019 Annual Report -

2019 was another very full year for Christian County Master Gardeners, filled with interesting programs and seminars, rewarding hands-in-the-dirt garden projects and plenty of fellowship and laughs. We stayed true to our mission to educate others about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes and communities. The Master Gardener program, administered through the University of Missouri Extension, promotes and raises public awareness of the Extension as a source of unbiased, research-based gardening information.



Leading our chapter were President Jennifer Ailor, Vice President Karen Bell, Secretary Patty Baker, Treasurer Beth Platt, Member Advocate (later changed to New Members Chair) Debbie Clithero and Program Co-Chairs Colleen McMahan and Bud Bodey. Chairing our different projects and activities were Dennis Baker, Hotline; Beth Platt, Fairs and Shows; J.J. Leek and Marla Hull, OC Demo Garden; Karen Daake, Rotary Garden; Colleen



McMahan, Nixa Community Center Garden; Patty and Dennis Baker, Gardens at Woodfield; Millie Hesington, Judicial Center Garden; Karen Bell, Spring and Fall Plant Sales; Virginia Roberts, TLC; Laura Burdette, Facebook; Jennifer Ailor, Publicity and Website; Annie Powers, Newsletter; Becky Jagears, Scrapbook; Karen Daake, Hospitality; and Pam Shaver,

Seminars and Advanced Training.

In November, the membership elected several officers for 2020: Virginia Roberts as vice president, Beth Platt as treasurer, Charlotte Llwellyn as program chair A and Dennis Baker as program chair B.

CCMG thanks the Nixa City Council for once again waiving facility rental fees at the Nixa Community Center where we held our seminars, advanced training workshop and spring plant sale. We also thank the City of Ozark for its support of the demonstration garden at the Ozarks Community Center.

Here are highlights of our 2019:

Totals – Thirty-one members, including 12 emeritus members, reported 3,113.10 volunteer hours, 474.35 education hours and 61.75 advanced training hours for a total of 3,649.20 hours. The volunteer hours were

valued by Extension at \$79,166.13! We also reported 549 contacts.

New Members - We gained eight new members through both online training and a class conducted by Jim Spencer and Tim Schnakenberg of Christian and Stone County Extension, respectively. New members are Ray Brinson, Deanna Buechter, Yvonne Goodman, Sue Helm, Ed Kucab, Patience Loe and Michele Raymond. Laurie Peterson also joined us through transfer. With our loss of two 2018 members due to lack of participation, we now have a total of 56 members.



Celebrating Our Members – This was the first year a new position, member advocate, later changed to new members chair, was activated to recruit new members for CCMG. Now a voting member of the executive board, Debbie Clithero worked tirelessly with Extension and our members to identify potential new members. She encouraged recruits to enroll for online or local Master Gardener training and extended invitations to attend membership meetings and seminars. Frequent follow-up calls and emails were sent to trainees to share dates and titles of upcoming events of interests, education programs, meetings, as well as to stay in contact.



In 2019, CCMG began offering three \$100 scholarships to new interns who completed training. The NMC worked with the board to design a scholarship application, publicize it and facilitate the selection committee. Scholarships were awarded to Jennifer Chan, Yvonne Goodman and Sue Helm at the December Christmas party and meeting.

To involve and support new trainees, now interns, during and after training, the NMC coordinated CCMGs to attend training sessions. She also organized a meet and greet at monthly membership meetings and oversaw an improved mentoring process to match interns with experienced members. Debbie also reached out to inactive emeritus members to encourage them to reconnect with CCMG.



Emeritus Members – Marla Hull and Gary Jenks became emeritus members, having served 10 years. Currently, we have 28 emeritus members of which 13 are active.

Plant Sales - Our sole source of funding comes from our spring and fall plant sales, with those sales specifically benefiting scholarships and CCMG projects. Our May 4

spring sale was the best in the history of the chapter, earning \$5,000.04, and our fall sale earned \$646. By comparison, our 2018 spring plant sale earned \$3,444.73 and the fall sale \$528.



The spring sale included a donation of 100 trees and 100 shrubs from the Missouri Department of Conservation, which we gave to buyers, along with marigold seedlings grown by members and information on companion plants. In total, 20 members donated 1,633 plants and garden accessories, 12 members helped set up the day before and 24





members participated on the day of the sale.

Programs, Outings and Special Events – This year we invited the public to attend most of our monthly programs—and had good results, sometimes with a dozen guests! Our meetings included an annual

spring picnic and Christmas party in December; our annual Project Fair in January; a Plant Buddy exchange in August; and programs on grow lights, invasive plants, pruning trees, raised beds and planters, growing tomatoes, climate change for gardeners and gardening as you grow older.



We sent two members to represent us at the First Lady of Missouri’s tea party in Jefferson City. We carpoled to Hilltop Farm to visit its greenhouses and learn about new offerings for the spring. It also facilitated many conversations about propagation and growing plants. We organized a bus tour of a beautiful residential shade garden in Springfield, the Berry Patch farm of member J.J. Leek and the greenhouse and gardens of member Laura



Burdette. Also included was a lunch at Highland Springs Country Club and presentations by the Chef Craig Von Foerster and his wife, Tamara Pursley-Von Foerster, who grows the restaurant’s produce, on their farm-to-table restaurant,



In the fall, Nixa Christmas Parade in December we Three of our Nixa members, Beth Platt, lead vehicle.



we held our first plant swap, and for the were honored to be the Grand Marshall. Karen Daake and Martie Cornell rode in the

Fairs and Shows and Speakers Bureau

members assisted with a seed swap and a presentation on winter gardening at the Christian County Library, staffed an exhibit at the opening of the Walmart Garden Center at Ozark, planted seeds with Tiger Paws children in Ozark, helped Cub Scouts in Nixa plant seeds and learn how to care for them, presented a program to Parents as Teachers at Tiger Paws about seed growing and exhibited at the Ozark Arts and Crafts Fair. At the latter, heavy rain and strong winds cut down attendance and on Sunday morning destroyed our tent. Led by Beth Platt, we reached 248 Caucasian females, 59 Caucasian males and 1 African American male.

– Fourteen CCMG



Hotline – We expanded our coverage to four mornings a week from mid-March to mid-October. Our team of 5



regular volunteers and 3 subs, led by Dennis Baker, helped 85 people who called, emailed or walked into the Extension office. Some of the volunteers spent hours spread over days, weeks and months researching issues and finding the answers and solutions. The public responded with several thank you notes. We also ordered books on trees, gardening with less water and biochar from Storey Publishing for the hotline reference and lending library and took and filled orders from other CCMG

members.

Bylaws – The board spent nearly six months updating the bylaws, presenting to the membership, tweaking a few items and re-presenting for a final vote in September. The



motion to accept the changes passed. We now have a succession plan and one-year terms for the vice president and president positions.



Facebook – Laura Burdette transformed the CCMG Facebook page from an initial 214 followers to 534. CCMG members contributed photos and comments throughout the year, and the chapter’s numerous events were promoted as well. In particular, the spring plant sale promotion garnered responses from 1,584 people. Sales, as noted earlier, were the highest in the history of the chapter.

Other promotions likewise resulted in hundreds or even thousands of responses from viewers.

Website and Publicity - In addition to maintaining the CCMG website, Jennifer Ailor designed fliers for our seminars and workshops and special events and emailed them with news releases and other information to media, members, nonmembers, prospective members, other Master Gardener chapters, gardening organizations, Extension offices in about 10 area counties and other organizations such as Missouri Master Naturalists. These efforts helped boost attendance at our events and build public awareness. CCMG information regularly appeared in the Christian County Headliner and Springfield News-Leader, on KSMU radio and occasionally on local TV and other radio stations.

Judicial Center – Millie Hesington led 10 volunteers in planting about 40 annuals and 20 perennials in the beds on the north side of the center. She reported, “We have received many comments from people coming in and out of the Judicial Center or walking by. Most said how appreciative they were for our hard work and how nice it was looking.” The committee appreciated help from the maintenance crew in watering and trimming the oak leaf hydrangeas.



Gardens at Woodfield – Led by Patty and Dennis Baker, eight volunteers worked throughout the year at our berm, weeding, mulching, adding plants and watering. We added natives, including coneflowers, sedum, American beauty berry, swamp milkweed and various daisies, and labeled all the plants in the berm with their common and scientific names to help educate visitors. Near the berm, we also planted a weeping cherry tree in



honor of Donna Singleton, funded by her family. We are waiting on Nixa Parks and Recreation to install a memorial marker, but we have added her name to the memorial bench.

Rotary Garden – Led by Karen Daake, each of six volunteers adopted a berm and three also worked on other areas in the garden. We had an all-membership workday to help with weeding and mulching, but our fall "Make a Difference Day" with the Rotary Club was rained out in October. Member Bud Bodey added rocks to some of the berms and cleared old shrubs on the southwest corner of the garden to add focus to a large tree there. We took the dismantled keyhole garden from the demonstration garden at the OC for future use and planted a new lilac bush, perennials and annuals. The garden is enjoyed by daily visitors eating lunch, walking their dogs or admiring the flowers. We estimate our contacts were about



60 women and 40 men, mostly Caucasian.



Nixa Community Center - The Nixa Community Center had three regular volunteers who maintained the pool area, sun garden to the left of the entrance and shade garden to the right. We cleared the south side bed of trees and old shrubs and planted natives, including coneflowers, fire pinks, royal catchfly and prairie blazing stars. Unfortunately, most of them did not survive the hot summer and the lack of a watering system. We also planted two of the large cement planters in the pool area

with Missouri primroses obtained from existing plants. They did very well. CCMG has requested a plaque for the south garden area that credits CCMG with the maintenance, but Nixa Parks and Recreation has not placed a sign yet.

An estimated 25 contacts were made, mostly members of the center, who had questions or compliments about the plants. The contacts consisted of 1 Asian female, 14 Caucasian females and 5 Caucasian males. Colleen McMahan, project chair, consulted with two contacts about their own gardens.

Demonstration Garden – Sadly, the demonstration garden at the Ozark Community Center was closed in the fall because the city wanted the site for an expanded playground. The city had built the garden but transitioned its maintenance to CCMG after the first year. Many volunteer hours and donations by local businesses made the garden a success.

In closing the garden, chairs J.J. Leek and Marla Hull arranged to donate several of the raised beds to local schools for their greenhouse and gardening projects. The Ozark Alternative School received one of the wooden raised beds along with some of the asparagus, blackberry and rhubarb plants. Nixa Junior High received four concrete block raised beds. It was such a pleasure working with the young men and women and their teachers in relocating the beds.



Before the closure, we held spring and summer planting sessions and added new vegetable and fruit varieties. Students from Ozark High School helped with the spring planting. Through the years, we experimented with inground, raised beds made of different materials including concrete block and timber, straw bales, a vertical garden and modified drums. We appreciate the city's support throughout the last decade. We estimate 50 contacts made during the year, most of them male

Caucasians.

Clever City Hall Garden – Eric and Lydia Binai and two other volunteers transformed the garden at Clever City Hall and Clever City Park. As visitors approached the Clever City Hall, they saw a large concrete planter filled with a thriller, filler and spiller and backdropped with a planting of iris. In the park behind the hall, residents enjoy a pavilion for picnics and get-togethers. Slightly raised beds at each corner of the pavilion are filled with established oak leaf hydrangeas and hostas. Some annuals were planted in the spring to add color and fill in bare spots. On the south side of the park a well-established butterfly garden required minimal maintenance, just watering throughout the summer. We made six contacts: 4 Caucasian females and 2 Caucasian males.

Seminars and Advanced Training – Led by Pam Shaver, the chapter's seminars and advanced training

committee offered three free public seminars and one advanced training workshop for Master Gardeners as part of our *Garden Gate* educational program. In February, "Five Best Gardening Practices" was designed especially for beginning gardeners—or seasoned gardeners eager to learn something new. This very well attended seminar featured five CCMG members speaking about the basics of gardening. We covered vital gardening topics, including mulching and composting, pruning, matching plants to the right location, watering methods and safe pest control.



Our second seminar once again featured some of our own Christian County Master Gardeners, who discussed types of greenhouses, how to heat or cool a greenhouse and what to grow or not to grow. In addition, Wesley Hunter of Providence Farms shared details about community-supported agriculture, such as purpose, structure and products.



Our third event, "Creating a Functional Rain Garden," in August was an advanced training workshop for Master Gardeners only. After the speaker, Katie Keith from the Springfield-Greene County Botanical Center, covered such topics as water problems a rain garden can solve, structures that aid in water drainage for rain gardens and best plants and locations for rain gardens, she worked individually with attendees to discuss creating their own rain gardens. Finally, Master

Gardeners moved to the rain garden outside the Botanical Center to observe the plants and structure of the garden.

Our final seminar in November focused first on "Winter Care for Tender Plants." Linda Siler of Wickman's Garden Center discussed moving plants inside for the winter, fertilizing, light and watering requirements and even growing carnivorous plants and using coconut fiber bowls as growing containers. During the second half of the seminar, member Tina Cackley discussed how to grow and care for succulents.



We reached 160 people of which 46 were male, 114 female, 155 Caucasian, 3 Native American, 1 African American and 1 Asian.

A Newsletter Revived - Annie Powers published quarterly "From the Garden Gate" newsletters for the membership, filled with useful gardening tips and information about chapter members and events.



Scrapbook and TLC – Becky Jagears' 2019 scrapbook of CCMG events overflowed into a second book because of the quantity of events and information. Her efforts captured the spirit of the year for future leaders and members to savor and reminisce.

Scholarships Awarded – We awarded two \$500 Ozarks student from Christian County majoring in addition, we established a new scholarship fund with Ozarks Richwood Valley campus that will be funded in 2020. As with the other scholarship, \$500 will be awarded each semester to a qualifying student in horticulture or a related field of study, with Christian County residents given preference.



scholarships to a College of the Ozarks in horticulture or botany. In addition, we established a new scholarship fund with Ozarks Richwood Valley campus that will be funded in 2020. As with the other scholarship, \$500 will be awarded each semester to a qualifying student in horticulture or a related field of study, with Christian County residents given preference.

Goals and Objectives for 2020 - At an appreciation and planning meeting Jan. 13, 2020, for past and present project leaders and officers of CCMG, we agreed on our overall goal and some chapter-wide priorities for 2020. In doing so, we kept in mind our mission to educate ourselves and others about best gardening practices.

Goal - To support the educational mission of Missouri Master Gardeners and grow our chapter through our monthly programs, speakers' bureau, exhibits, garden projects, plant sales, hotline seminars, advanced training, field trips, newsletter, social media, website and other activities.

Objectives – Specific objectives and action steps for 2020 are:

- Improve recognition for chapter by nominating Debbie Clithero for the Missouri Master Gardener Association (MOMGA) Member of the Year Award for 2019 and by nominating our chapter for Chapter of the Year Award for 2019.
- Encourage participation in the MOMGA state conference by offering one or more scholarships to members to offset some expenses of attending the MOMGA conference in September.
- Identify a specific chapter-wide project for the year, possibly the Rotary Garden because of its high traffic and the size of the garden.
- Improve public education by completing labelling of plants at all our garden projects, updating signage where needed and where permitted installing information boxes with contact information inside.
- Honor deceased members by completing memorial markers for Donna Singleton and Lois Helderman.
- Improve governance by updating our bylaws regarding quorum and numbers needed to approve motions.
- Increase our knowledge and foster greater camaraderie among members and other gardeners through a bus trip to gardens in the St. Louis area, including the state botanical center.
- Increase public awareness of CCMG through additional Facebook contacts, expanded website and more publicity and media follow-up.
- Shorten monthly meetings by reducing the break time and streamlining project reports.
- Improve presentation skills and tools by offering a PowerPoint training workshop for members.
- Improve Fairs and Shows outreach by replacing tent and banner and ordering a folding table.
- Improve website by identifying a member to maintain website.
- Improve knowledge of chapter by producing a PowerPoint of chapter activities to run at seminars and meetings before called to order.
- Explore a new location to rebuild our keyhole garden and have a vegetable garden plot.
- Explore potential opportunities for collaboration and public education with Finley Farms in Ozark.
- Promote more “fellowship and friendship” by encouraging short, local day trips and lunch outings.
- Encourage members to support our TLC efforts with contacts and information.
- Promote mentoring by recognizing individual mentors during the year.
- Encourage members to also be Green Gardeners in our efforts to educate the public and ourselves about adapting our gardening practices to a changing climate and changing growing conditions.

