

The Garden Gate

December 2008



Edited by Chris McIntosh (dcradish@gmail.com)

Onward and Upward

As we near the end of this year and plan for next year's Master Gardener program, discussions are ongoing to improve it. We are interested in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all MG trainees and MGs wishing to recertify and stay involved. Here are some developments:

- We would like to encourage involvement of former or associate MGs that may have dropped out of the program along the way. Some MGs had the great idea to hold an open house this winter to invite former MGs back into the program.
- I am currently working on a monthly Advanced Master Gardener Program that would begin in March and run through October. This program would be free to all MGs that agree to recertify for 2009, no matter if they have been involved in the program recently. The classes will be indoors initially, but then would consist of tours and other outdoor activities as soon as the weather warrants.
- The BCMGA voted at the December 2 meeting to change the designation of those MGs wishing NOT to recertify to be called inactive MGs rather than associate MGs. The inactive status will eventually contain the provision that they can recertify within a given period of time (i.e., 2-3 years).
- In January, all MG applicants will be personally interviewed by myself and CMGs to make the policies and commitment to the training and the plant clinic clear. We will ask some pertinent questions to be sure the applicant is a good fit for the program and vice versa. We will distribute handbooks and the training schedule and syllabus at the interview. **The application deadline for 2009 is Friday, December 12.** Please tell anyone you know who might be interested in the program that they need to submit their application to the Extension office by that date.
- At the November 5 meeting, the BCMGA Board voted to increase to total number of hours required of MG Trainees for the first year from 35 to 40 hours. The Plant Clinic requirement will remain at 24 hours. The recertification requirement will remain the same at 9 hours plant clinic and 9 hours in other projects.

I hope these development foster a welcoming and vibrant Master Gardener Program.

Don't forget – Master Gardener Christmas Party is Friday, December 12 at 6:00 pm at the Sandpoint Community Hall!

Happy Holidays!

Mike

Down the Garden Path

Let's review our Master Gardener 2008 year. Wow! What a year we have had in our organization. We should all feel very, proud of our many accomplishments.

Our biggest accomplishment of course, was welcoming in 22 New Master Gardeners to our membership. So many new officers, board members and just great volunteers are coming from this class. We all additionally have the potential to make some warm, new long lasting friendships. I personally treasure the bounty I have received in my life from these new friendships.

We have been so very fortunate to add Mike Bauer as our Extension Educator. He has so much to offer to the Master Gardener Program, and many other programs throughout the county. He is offering us a new Master Gardener Training Class as well as an advanced class this coming spring. Continuing our education allows us to serve the public in the Plant Clinic ever more efficiently. We are so grateful to all that you do Mike.

We have so many hard working, totally dedicated volunteers in our organization. My gratitude is boundless for all that you do. Your Vice-President Gail Swan is such a volunteer. She went so far beyond the duties of a Vice-President, and did so willingly and always with a smile. I am so thankful to her for standing beside me this entire year, always willing to do whatever it took to get the job done. Gail you are an outstanding Master Gardener and a dear friend. All our hearts go out to you in your loss.

My appreciation to Chris McIntosh, for creating a user friendly Garden Gate. Her addition of the calendar, made it so easy, to keep up with events as they came along. Her creativeness, made the GG functional, colorful and a pleasure to receive and read. Chris's dedication didn't stop with the GG. She has also been an outstanding Public Relations person. Because of the multitudes of ads Chris placed for us in many publications we have had the most successful Home Horticulture Series ever. Not only has the HH brought education to the public but has given us a means of adding to our treasury at the same time. I am happy to add that Chris has graciously accepted staying on as our PR person for 2009.

I offer a big thank you to Ann Warwick for her getting the word out about Plant A Row. No other time in recent memory has this project been more needed in our community. Because of the economy, so many of our local families are struggling to place fresh, nutritious food, on their tables. Ann keeps this information in front of the public with her articles in the Co-op news as well as countless letters to the editor. Her last article was a huge thank you to the public and the Jail Garden for embracing this project and feeding needy families in our community. Please be sure to do what you can to get the word out yourselves.

The dedication to excellence that Martha Fortunati has brought to the Plant Clinic was a shining example to our new students on how to help the public with their many plant issues. Her tutelage, has taken the fear from their hearts and made them fall in love with the process of discovery. I am grateful she has found this union between the Master Gardeners and the Plant Clinic so fulfilling. So much so Martha has agreed to be our Plant Clinic Coordinator again for 2009.

I wish to express a special thank you to Janae Dale for her cheerful service to the program and myself throughout the year. Janae has been a behind the scenes person offering her council and service and unwavering friendship whenever I was in need. Janae has also been my newsletter editor. I feel I am able to express myself well but I sometimes don't have the grammar or punctuation done properly and she takes care of that for me without making me feel inept. I know Janae's dedication and loyalty to the program will shine through during her Presidency in 2009. I ask all of you to assist Janae any way you can. Because when we all work together, a happy cohesive atmosphere prevails.

OTHER ITEMS OF APPRECIATION

The membership board: Brenda Fletcher, Linda Kirchmann, Liz Kunze, Jan Rumore and Ann Warwick for 12 months of membership service.

Kit Cooley: For signing up to co-chair the fair booth, and continuing on alone when unfortunate circumstances happened in your co-chairs life. You did a bang up job!

Janae Dale: For having another successful yard sale.

Brenda Fletcher: A great display booth at the Home and Garden Show

Jan Rumore and Gail Swan: City Basket Project

Howard Fennimore: For building great compost bins for the Learning Garden and new bookshelves for the Plant Clinic.

Don Childress, Janae Dale and Gail Swan for 12 terrific Home Horticulture Classes.

Valle Novak: For the Healing Garden

Jan Griffitts: Mickinnick Trail

Jay D. Baker: For being the youngest graduate on record in our organization. You have paved the way for others to follow.

My most humble apologies to anyone I might have inadvertently missed. It takes all of you to make this Organization the success it is and you should be proud of your individual assistance to that end.

It's impossible for me to express what being your Master Gardener President these past two years has meant for me personally. I do so love this program as it fulfills me in so many ways. Your faith in my ability to hold this organization together during the period without an Extension Educator was well, overwhelming. The fact you all stood behind me when I wanted to put on a new class was a testament to that faith. It's because of your unwavering support that this year was nothing but remarkable in our short history as an organization. My gratitude to the membership cannot be adequately expressed, as this experience will live on in my heart for all the rest of my days.

Your devoted servant,

Penny Barton, Master Gardener President