



Master Gardeners & Composters

Program Highlights

- ◆ Celebrated 30 years of service in Placer and Nevada Counties
- ◆ 220 certified Master Gardener volunteers
- ◆ Over 12,000 hours of service were provided by Master Gardener volunteers
- ◆ The Master Gardeners held 49 workshops and participated in 28 community events
- ◆ Over 12,600 people received gardening composting information through Master Gardener outreach and education

The UC Placer-Nevada Master Gardener Program provides volunteer training and horticultural knowledge to enhance home landscapes and garden experiences while striving to improve and preserve the quality of our natural environment.

The UC Master Gardener Programs in Placer and Nevada Counties began in 1983 to meet the demands of the growing population and mitigate one-on-one requests to Extension staff for home gardening and related information.

Interest in home gardening and urban horticulture continues to grow. Gardening is the most popular hobby in the United States, and landscape/nursery crops are now the third largest agricultural crop in California. UC Master Gardeners identify issues and needs of Placer and Nevada County residents, and develop educational activities to address these concerns in the areas of:

- Water Wise Gardening
- Firesafe Landscaping
- Pest Management
- Vegetable Gardening
- Prevention and Diagnosis
- Recycling Garden Waste
- School Gardens
- Perennials and Flowering Shrubs
- Soil and Irrigation
- Community Gardens



Celebrating 30 Years of Service

With the goal of shifting public perceptions of yard and garden debris from “wastes” to “resources,” the University of California Cooperative Extension’s volunteer Master Composters have engaged the public in recognizing the importance of organics management through composting, vermi-composting, and shredding/chipping/mulching. These activities alone can divert between 20 and 35% of a family’s garbage from the landfills and have helped Placer and Nevada Counties meet state mandated diversion rates.



Volunteer Training

ISSUE

With a “growing” interest in gardening in our communities comes the increased need for more Master Gardener volunteers to help educate the public on good gardening practices that lead to success in the garden and landscape.

WHAT WAS DONE

In September 2012, recruitment began for the next Master Gardener volunteer training beginning in January 2013. Over 100 people attended an informational meeting to hear about the program and training requirements. Of which, 80 interested community members eventually applied and interviewed for one of the available spots. Forty-eight applicants were selected from the pool to participate in the training which had classes scheduled every Friday afternoon from January 4th through May 3rd, 2013.

IMPACT

After participating and completing the Master Gardener volunteer training, 48 new certified Master Gardeners were welcomed into our two county programs on graduation day, May 3, 2013.

For the first year of volunteer service, these 48 Master Gardeners committed to giving at least 50 volunteer hours to the community through the Placer and Nevada Counties’ Master Gardener programs.

This equates to a minimum of **2,400 new volunteer hours** coming into our communities with the mission of helping local gardeners grow healthy food and healthy landscapes.



Master Gardener volunteers receive extensive composting training and visit the Material Recovery Facility in Roseville to see large scale composting in action!



Master Gardener volunteers in training visit a local vineyard to learn about growing wine grapes in the foothills.



Composting Education



You never know who or what might make an appearance at our compost workshops!!

After attending a composting workshop, one attendee was thrilled:

"I never thought learning about rotting stuff could be so inspiring and intriguing!"



A workshop where participants learn about worm composting and build worm bins to take home.

ISSUE

When organic materials are deposited in our landfills, problems arise. From methane gas to toxic leachate, organic materials continue to decompose in our landfills and create challenges for management of the negative by-products of their decomposition. If homeowners compost organic materials at home, we can prevent them from going to the landfill and homeowners can create a soil amendment that will enhance their landscapes and gardens.

WHAT WAS DONE

The Master Gardeners in both Placer and Nevada Counties continue to offer composting workshops to the public at numerous venues. This past year, over 15 workshops have been given and, furthermore, the Master Gardeners have also attended many community events with a focus on composting education. These workshops and events have been consistently attended and appreciated by the public.

IMPACT

- Over **1,000** people received information from the Master Gardeners on Composting at community events in Placer and Nevada Counties.
- **15** composting workshops were given throughout Placer and Nevada Counties reaching **214** people.
- Composting outreach to local schools and pre-schools has also been well-received.



Collaborations



Master Gardeners at the Farmer's Market with free information for home gardeners.

In the spirit of community building, the Master Gardeners have expanded their educational venues through collaborations with various Cities and local organizations.



Master Gardeners answer questions at a community event.

ISSUE

Although the Master Gardeners have tons of good information for local gardeners, it is often difficult to extend this information to the public and reach specific audiences. Rather than waiting for inquiries, it is essential to identify venues that make sense for outreach and education to be sure information is passed along. In this way, collaborating with interested parties allows for expansion into previously underserved communities.

WHAT WAS DONE

The UC Master Gardeners of Placer and Nevada Counties have collaborated with local Cities, non-profits, schools, and businesses to bring gardening education to all areas of our counties.

IMPACT

The Master Gardeners have increased the number of county residents they reach through collaborations with entities such as:

- City of Auburn
- Roseville Utility Exploration Center
- Nevada Irrigation District
- Resource Conservation Districts
- Various local schools
- Placer County Water Agency
- Placer Nature Center
- Grower's Markets
- CA Native Plant Society

These partnerships continue to grow and bloom!



Websites and Social Media

ISSUE

There is an increasing need for educational organizations to have a presence on the web and on social media sites to reach diverse audiences. These online resources allow for greater and more consistent outreach throughout the year.

WHAT WAS DONE

The Master Gardeners in both Placer and Nevada Counties created websites for their specific programs and loaded the sites with content and links to resources. Clients also now have the ability to submit questions online in addition to phone and walk-in options.

Both programs have also created Facebook pages and consistently post gardening tips, workshop notices, and links to gardening and composting information.

IMPACT

Facebook has provided a platform to reach a larger audience and plug them into all the great activities and opportunities available through the Master Gardener outreach programs. Also, with our Master Gardener office hotlines on a limited schedule, the online interface provides an "anytime" opportunity for clients to ask questions.

Both websites have been receiving good traffic and are continually being updated with more and more information.



The Master Gardeners in both Placer and Nevada Counties have great websites and Facebook pages full of great gardening and composting information.



Senior Community Garden



The Senior Community Garden plots produce a lot of produce. Some of the surplus is donated to the Auburn Food Closet.



Placer County Master Gardeners Edible Demonstration Garden.

From a Senior Gardener, “The opportunity to garden here is something I really appreciate, because I live in an apartment, and I don’t even have a balcony for containers.”

ISSUE

There are many senior citizens in our counties who live in senior housing, apartments, and other homes that lack outdoor space for gardening. They do not have the opportunity to experience the numerous benefits that gardening offers in the form of physical, mental, and emotional exercise. In addition, in some senior living situations, there are very few people to socialize with on a regular basis.

WHAT WAS DONE

The Senior Community Garden was developed and offered as a space for seniors to garden and socialize. The University of California Cooperative Extension partnered with the County of Placer to transform an unused portion of an athletic field into a community garden. This partnership resulted in a fenced garden area, irrigation installation, shed placement, and the creation of 30 plots with pathways in between.

IMPACT

The Senior Garden has all 30 plots under cultivation and produces a large amount of fresh produce for the senior gardeners who tend it. The garden not only provides a place to grow fresh food, but also serves as a gathering spot for seniors to bring their friends, socialize, and create new relationships. There is constantly a waiting list for the plots in the garden, and it has been written about in the local paper.

In addition to the Community Garden, the Placer Master Gardeners have carved out a little section within the overall garden for an Edible Demonstration Garden. This space is being developed to demonstrate different growing techniques and will serve as an educational venue for the volunteers to teach the public. There is also a composting area and fruit trees planted within the demonstration site.