Master Gardener Project Annual Report

Core Project: Butterfly House
Johnson County Fair, July 24th - 27th, 2022

Name of Project Chairs(s): Carolyn Murphy, Mike Murphy

Number of Master Gardeners involved/impacted with project: Provide brief statement of what this involvement/impact was.

Involved # 39 master gardeners, 3 Forever Green staff, and 2 family members
Impacted # 6,200 people visited the exhibit during the 4 days of the fair.
We setup displays outside the hoophouse to showcase butterflies in every stage of development, pollinator educational material and interactive activities to encourage learning. We provided opportunities to make milkweed and wildflower seed balls, run thru "Millie the Caterpillar" tunnel, and a chance to be a butterfly at the custom butterfly photo stand. The ending of the fair was highlighted with the release of around 100 monarch butterflies with a large crowd in attendance. This annual fair event has been sponsored by the Johnson County Master Gardeners, Johnson County Agricultural Association and Forever Green Nursery since 2013.

***Summary of project activities conducted throughout the year and results of the project: (include any data of successes of the project*).**

The Butterfly House exhibit is continuing to connect JCMG to additional community and state partnerships. This past year Mike, Angela and I set up pollinator displays on the following dates including the silent auction and Johnson County 4-H fair details.

April 3 – Make Seed Ball Event, Indian Creek Nature Center, Cedar Rapids. Partnered with Milkweed Matters director, Nancy Crews and ICNC Activities director, Andria Cassolette. Angela and Carolyn talked with the kids about monarchs and assisted with making seed balls.

April 24th – ISU Insect Zoo, Mercer Park, Iowa City. Over 700 visitors attended. Master gardeners Joanne Leach, Angela, Mike, and Carolyn Murphy made milkweed seed balls and talked about pollinators and the butterfly displays, while Kay Mohling & Li-Hsien Lin answered gardening questions at the Attended Display table.

May 7th – Silent Auction Fundraiser for the Butterfly House at the MG Plant Sale & Flea Market. MG volunteers included Pam Buethe, Joanne Leach, Angela, Mike, & Carolyn Murphy. With Pam's previous experience holding auctions, she offered to reorganize the bidding process and the staging of the auction items. As you can in the photo, Pam did an amazing job. This allowed time for me to create a logo for the Butterfly House. The banner became a family project with my son, Ryan Murphy, a game designer, putting professional touches on the

design. Auction items were donated by Master Gardeners and local businesses. Names are listed at the end of this report. A shout out to not only JCMG's but Benton and Mills County Master Gardeners who heard of the auction and donated items. We raised $1,500 for the Butterfly House.

June 4 - Iowa Arts Festival, downtown Iowa City. JCMG's Partnered with 100 Grannies and Milkweed Matters, to make seed balls for the kid's day activity (pictured). Seed balls were given to RAGBRI riders to toss along the roadsides. Est 800 visitors stopped by the table.

June 15th – Iowa City Summer Camp at Ashton House for 1-6th graders. 25 kids, 4 adults and 4 master gardeners. Mahmooda Ahmad, Lavon Yeggy, Mike, and Carolyn Murphy. Carolyn talked to the kids about what pollinators are, habitat, and monarch butterflies. We made milkweed & wildflower seed balls, colored and worked on garden crossword puzzles.

July 6 - Iowa City Summer Camp at Ashton House for 1-6th graders 29 kids, 4 adults, 4 master gardeners. Mahmooda Ahmad, Joanne Leach, Mike, and Carolyn Murphy. A new group of kids so we kept same routine as June 15th.

July 9th – Angela and Carolyn represented JCMG at the Monarch Festival, Indian Creek Nature Center in Cedar Rapids joined by Mary Bugler, Iowa Naturalist, and Iowa County Master Gardener. We partnered with Milkweed Matters to provide pollinator education & a seed ball activity. We gave out ISU educational material and talked to visitors about monarch butterflies. 1,000 people in attendance.

July 23rd – Butterfly Training at the fairgrounds. 17 master gardeners attended. Carolyn M and Lucy Hershberger gave instructions on how we would operate the house and outside exhibits. We talked about the 10 varieties of native butterflies in the house, showed how to handle the monarch butterflies, their habitat in the Midwest and migration route. We talked about the addition of the Polyphemus moths that were being added to the exhibit. Earlier in the season we shared eggs and caterpillar with several interested master gardeners.

July 24-27th – 39 master gardeners, 3 Forever Green staff volunteered during the Johnson County Fair. This was the smallest crew that we had worked with, however they helped setup/take down and covered multiple shifts. Around 6,200 visitors attended the Butterfly House Exhibit. Seed ball activity took place each day and was featured along with pollinator puzzles and coloring activities for Kid's Day. Other activities included a butterfly photo booth and "Millie the Caterpillar" tunnel. As a fundraiser to help support the exhibit, we sold butterfly wings and other merchandise. Master Gardener, Mahmooda Ahmad (pictured), offered her artistic henna paintings to raise funds this year. Sales totaled $1,579 with another $311.41 in free-will donations. We spent $1,509.50 for butterflies from Michigan Native Butterfly Farm. Other expenses included water for volunteers, table clothes, & supplies to run the event.

June 29 – September 22 – Mike and Carolyn helped Oaknoll Health Center set up and care for a Monarch Bio Tent. It was our pleasure to help supply the monarch caterpillars and care for the milkweed plants. We talked with staff and residents on each visit about monarch behavior. Sept 7th, I gave a talk about the monarch's journey to Mexico and helped 25 staff and residents tag and release the monarch butterflies they had raised.

September 11, Forever Green Monarch Tagging & Release. Angela, Mike, Carolyn Murphy, and Mahmooda helped with tagging monarch butterflies. – 75 community visitors & staff tagged 100 monarchs.

Statement of what you would consider the greatest success of this project:

This project has allowed us to share our knowledge and reach out to a greater audience. The efforts the JCMG group make is only a small part of the big picture, but an important part – providing education. The support is evident in the hundreds of volunteer hours the master gardeners donate each year. We don't have 2022 volunteer hours yet, however, 621 hours were recorded in 2019 and 567 in 2021. The Butterfly House draws not only 4-H families, but children's daycares, elderly care facilities, and even international visitors this year. On their travels from Switzerland, these girls' father, a professional photograph for a global magazine, brought his two girls (pictured) to the fair. Knowing their interest in butterflies and studying them in school, they spent several hours at the butterfly exhibit. We enjoyed comparing the different species of butterflies and habitats in Iowa to those of Switzerland while making seedballs. Their father and I agreed, "butterflies know no boundaries". Milkweed Matters partnered with us this summer suppling the materials to make seedballs. In turn, Angela & I pledged 2,000 seedballs for the great bicycle ride across Iowa (RAGBRAI). Due to the Iowa City Parks and Recreation Department asking us to join their community events & with the JC fair, we were able to make 2,500 milkweed & wildflower seed balls.

What needs are there to help this project continue?

The continued support of the JC Master Gardeners, Forever Green Nursery & the Johnson County Agricultural Association is key to continued success of the Butterfly House. We started this project off with a year commitment (then 5-years) to see how well a butterfly house would be received. We now are looking forward to celebrating the 10th year anniversary in 2023.

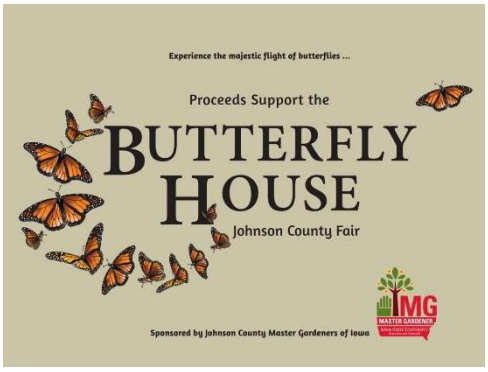
What changes/additions would you like to make for the future?

1) Reconstruct "Millie the Caterpillar" tunnel – make the frame easier and faster to set up/take down and to store.
2) Add permanent signage at the butterfly house. With being at the fairgrounds, master gardeners have a real opportunity to reach people regarding the important role pollinators play in our food production. The goal would be to have the posters available to visitors all year long, not just the four days of the 4-H fair. I am looking into a metal frame that parks use which allows the poster to be changed periodically. The initial cost may be high, but the benefits would be great.
3) A Monarch Waystation application has been applied for and received. This spring a metal post will be installed to hang the sign designating the Butterfly House as a butterfly friendly habitat.
4) Create a large banner for the front of the hoophouse showing all sponsors with the new butterfly swirl logo. I am currently working on the layout. The banner should be weatherproof so can be installed in early spring and remain until late fall. It will be a great advertising tool for the fair and sponsors. I will talk with Lucy at Forever Green and the Fairboard members as soon as I have a draft.
5) I have a monarch butterfly design that would make an excellent photo backdrop. The idea is to construct it of material that would stay out year around. Mike and I are looking into weatherproof materials & paint possibilities. This project may not be possible if we run low on

funds, but the idea is to have a mural/imagines at the hoophouse all the time. I had this idea several years ago but due to limited funds it wasn't a reality.

I have budgeted $3000 of the $4100 from the Butterfly House account to complete as many of these projects as possible (we will need to reserve around $1500 for the purchase of butterflies for 2023 4-H fair).
This is the first year since we took over handling the money (2019) and fundraisers, that we have surplus funds. I will move forward with checking on pricing of a metal stand for the educational display.
Thank you volunteers for helping with activities. We can mark off another great year.
Submitted by Carolyn Murphy, December 01, 2022

Master Gardeners involved with the butterfly house and community events:
Mahmooda Ahmad, Pam Buethe, Deb Cassell, Joan Dinnel, Kathy Erenberger, Beth Fisher, Michelle Frauenholtz, Connie Funk, Janice Hining, Tracy Hufford, Brandi Janssen, Marge Jensen, Gail Johnson, Nancy Kennedy, Julie Koeppel, Joanne Leach, Alice Linhart, Elizabeth Loeb, Steve Lyons, Tomeka Magnani, Torrie Masko, Ramona McGurk, Kay Mohling, Angela Murphy, Louise Murray, Chris Parizek, Bonnie Penno, Cindy Pickett, Pat Quiles, Barb Robinson, Michelle Sorrell, Lori Stanley, Mary Starry, Susan Stump, Nancy Weber, Nancy Wehrheim, Lavon Yeggy, chairs, Mike & Carolyn Murphy

Business & Master Gardeners who donated items to the silent auction:
Forever Green Nursery, Lucy Hershberger, Earl May Garden Center, Iowa City Landscape, Cedar River Garden Center (Eileen Schmidt, Benton County Master Gardener), Hy-Vee Garden Center, Iowa City, Bill & Barb Schintler, JCMG, The Country Garden & Gifts, Josh Spece, Starbucks, Andy Dahl, University of Iowa Landscape Urban Forest Service, Stella & Frank Clark, Nancy Crews and Nancy Scott, authors of Saving Monarchs, Mills County Master Gardeners & Milkweed Matters. Johnson County Master Gardeners - Janice Hining, Pam Buethe, Sandy Gannon, Angela Murphy, Chris Sedrel, Melissa Serenda, Lavon Yeggy, Nancy Wehrheim, Shannon Bielicke, JCMG Coordinator and Mrs. Bielicke, Mike Murphy, Carolyn Murphy

Special Thanks
to the Extension Council & Shannon Bielicke for support in funding the cost of the banner (pictured below) and to Monarch Research Project, Marion, for donating 100 monarch caterpillars to Oaknoll Health Center and my monarch bio tents for educational purposes.