

The Iowa State Master Gardener (MG) Advisory Committee met Friday November 6, 2015 at the Speer room of the Mahlstede Building at Reiman Gardens beginning at 10 am. The meeting was called to order by President Megan Will.

The following members were present: Megan Will, MG member, Central; Suzette Striegel, Staff, Central; Gary Whittenbaugh, MG member, NE; Ashley Sherrets, Staff, NE; Jeri Bailey, MG member, SE; Shannon Bielicke, Staff, SE; Cathy Booth, MG member, SW; Jennifer Miler, Staff, SW; Margaret Murphy, Staff, NW; Susan DeBlieck, campus staff; Cindy Haynes, campus staff; and Denny Schrock, campus staff. Richard Jauron, campus staff arrived later, following a campus commitment. Unable to attend were Julie Koster, MG member, NW; Annette Shipley, REED; Alan Ladd, REED (alternate); and Donald Lewis, campus staff.

The summer webinar series had 150-230 people participate per webinar. Counties enjoyed the flexibility of having pre-recorded content to show. Recordings will be available on Iowa State University's ANR YouTube channel beginning in January.

The fall training class has 24 sites (involving 31 counties) with 305 trainees, of which 5 are ProHort trainees. There is a Class On Campus alternative for trainees needing it. There was discussion of county recommended volunteer service activities. Some counties have volunteer descriptions for their projects.

The volunteer manual is now available for use as a PDF. The annual agreement is part of the online hours reporting system. Paper copies of this agreement will need to be utilized for members submitting their hours on paper to county offices.

The new hours reporting system is operational. It is easier to use, and there are three YouTube videos on the website for volunteers to use to learn how to use the system.



The Master Gardener Program got a \$2500 Excellence in Extension grant. This funds two School Garden 101 train-the-trainer events. The first was held this week and had 30 Extension staff and their school partners attend.

The Master Gardener program got a \$75,000 grant from the USDA through the SNAP-Ed program. The grant is focused on hunger reduction. There are three pieces that the Master Gardener program will focus on: 1) mini-grant opportunities for Master Gardener groups focused on hunger projects, 2) winter webinars will be focused on working with food pantries and food safety, and 3) the ISU research farm demonstration gardens will be growing crops that food pantries prefer to get as donations.

The International Master Gardener Conference (IMGC) held in Omaha/Council Bluffs had 750 participants, with nine tours and more than 40 booths at the trade show.

Horticulture In-service will be February 19, 2016 at Reiman Gardens. This in-service will have a consumer-inquiry emphasis with hands-on activities. County Extension staff (including OAs) who handle consumer inquiries are encouraged to attend. (The Shade Tree short course is the following week).

Terms are up for Jeri, Julie, Jennifer, and Suzette; with all four eligible for an additional term. There was a motion for all to serve another term if willing. It was seconded and carried unanimously. Jeri, Jennifer, and Suzette agreed to another term. Julie, if interested will serve another term. If Julie does not wish to serve another term; the application process for a MG from NW will be completed before the next meeting.

Finalized data from the survey of Iowa Master Gardeners members conducted by graduate student Bryn Takle was reviewed. Brief summaries of the data will be reported in the Master Gardener newsletter. The full data will be reported in peer-reviewed journal articles.

The ISU Foundation can accept donations to the Master Gardener program. Also, companies that donate to organizations for employee's volunteer service can channel those funds to the statewide ISU Master Gardener program through the Foundation.

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of Iowa's Master Gardener training was conducted. The committee discussed the county side of marketing of the Master Gardener training. New materials for marketing were appreciated by counties.

Strengths:

- Well-trained presenters
- Face to face-have the materials
- Class on campus
- Volunteer manual
- Communication with coordinators
- Audience participation (good speaker interaction)
- One training per year

Weaknesses:

- Not enough hands-on
- Very intensive people
- Little opportunity for coordinator to offer more
- No plant ID training
- Stronger presentation on trees and shrubs
- Getting enough people to sign up
- Retention
- Report hours
- Volunteer policies as part of training

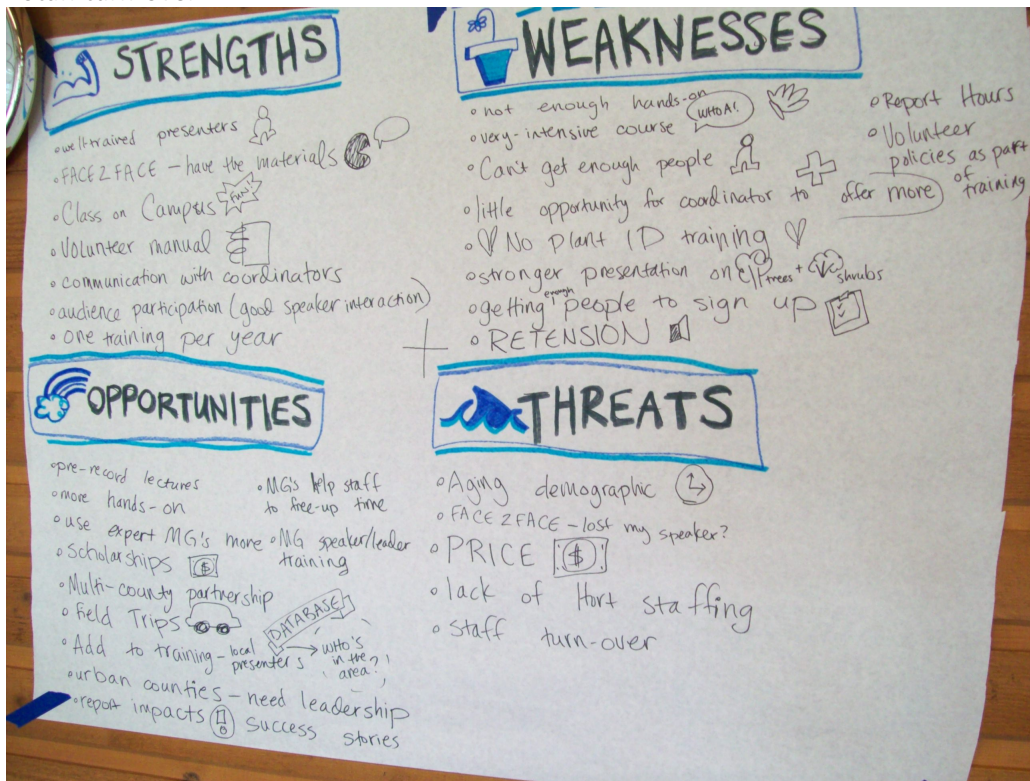
Opportunities:

- Pre-record lectures
- More hands-on
- Use expert MG's more
- Scholarships
- Multi-county partnership

- Field trips
- Add to training - local presenters
- Urban counties – need leadership
- Report impacts, success stories
- MG's help staff to free-up time
- MG speaker/leader training

Threats:

- Aging demographic
- Face to face – lost my speaker?
- Price
- Lack of hort staffing
- Staff turn-over



Via conference call, Mike Maddox, coordinator for the Wisconsin Master Gardeners, explained their “flipped” classroom concept and how it works in Wisconsin. Their training consists of pre-recorded units with distinct sections within the subject matter which trainees view on their own before class. Class time is spent on hands-on activities related to the subject matter. The goal is to have volunteers who can answer consumer questions, with an emphasis on IPM throughout the sessions. They utilize 12 sessions for initial training and have level 2 trainings for trainees after the initial training is completed. Wisconsin is willing to share their scripted hands-on activities with Iowa.

The advisory committee discussed if this style of training could be utilized in Iowa. Denny will obtain Wisconsin’s hands-on activities for further evaluation.

Ideas:

- Cut f/lectures and add hands-on

- Research Presentations and more speaker's bureau
- CyBox?
- Recognize county for growth
- Promote at county level – materials, templates
- Revisit objectives
- MG speaker/leader training – how to give presentation
- Coordinator training
- Videos to watch in advance

Next Steps:

- Review hands-on activities (f/wi)
- Add more hands-on breaks



The next Iowa State Master Gardener Advisory committee meeting will tentatively be Friday April 1, 2016 with meeting location to be announced. The meeting adjourned at 2 pm.

Submitted by Suzette Striegel, Secretary