

Iowa Master Gardener Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes April 7, 2017

The Iowa State Master Gardener Advisory committee met at 10 am in the Speer Room at Reiman Gardens.

Those present included:

- Ashley Sherrets NE staff,
- Sue Jarvis NW MG,
- Megan Will Central MG,
- Suzette Striegel Central Staff,
- Alan Ladd, Regional Director,
- Cindy Haynes State Staff,
- Denny Schrock State Staff,
- Lisa Dytrych SW MG,
- Ann Carter SW staff,
- Ellen Anderson NW staff,
- Shannon Bielicke SE Staff,
- Richard Jauron State Staff, and Donald Lewis State Staff.
- Unable to attend were Jerri Bailey, SE MG and Susan DeBlieck State Staff. Guests attending included Laura Irish, Graduate Student and Mike Dytrych.

Megan Will called the meeting to order. Introductions of new and existing committee members followed. A discussion of how to fill the open Northeast MG volunteer position was held. There was a motion to reopen the positions for applicants and encourage the past applicant not selected last year to reapply. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Denny Schrock explained the Plant.Grow.Fly partnership with Blank Park Zoo. It is an initiative to encourage planting pollinator gardens in Iowa, the Midwest and beyond. Anyone who gardens and meets the criteria of needed elements, may register their garden. The program began in 2016 and their goal for 2017 is 1000 gardens; presently there are 820. Iowa Master Gardeners are hoping to have members supply 50 gardens. Any individual Master Gardener in Iowa and Master Gardener projects which meet the criteria are encouraged to register their gardens. Gardens which do not meet the criteria are encouraged to add the missing item(s) and register also.

While Susan DeBlieck is out, Denny reported on the 2017 Winter Webinars. Topics were Donation and Small Space Gardens, Impact Matters, and Growing and Harvesting Vegetables. They were free and are still available on CyBox for counties to utilize. Counties are encouraged to reshew them, even multiple days and times as staff time allows. They will be available on YouTube after six months.

Denny also reported on the upcoming summer webinars. The topics are Urban Tree Selection, Gardening with Youth and Landscaping for Wildlife. They are \$25 each for counties to show at the time that they determine. Some counties offer the webinars free to Master Gardeners only,

some free to Master Gardeners and the public, and some charge everyone, while some counties charge less for Master Gardeners but open them to everyone and charge for all to attend. Due to Susan's return in late May they will not be available on CyBox until AFTER June 30. They will be available exclusively to the enrolled counties for six months. They will be available to everyone on YouTube after January 2018.

Cindy Haynes highlighted the features of the new consumer horticulture website. There is a press release and promotional cards we are encouraged to use. Additional cards can be ordered for free from the Extension online store.

Cindy also reviewed the 2017 plans for the Home Demonstration Gardens at 6 research farms. There is again food pantry donation garden cultivar trials with cool season crops, staked tomatoes (with Florida Weave), a raised bed for carrots and beets, and a tunnel for cucumbers and pole beans. If there are extra plants they will be utilized as container plants as varieties suitable for containers have been chosen. There will also be new cultivars and edible flowers featured at the demo gardens.

Laura Irish presented the SNAP-Ed *Growing Together* project's 2016 impact highlights. She encouraged counties to utilize the Spend Smart Eat Smart information and recipes with their food pantry donations. There is an ISU EO publication Hort 3068, "Top 13 Crops to Donate to Food Pantries"; which donation gardens are encouraged to utilize in their planting planning. Project members received the Creativity in Service to Iowans Award at Extension Annual Conference.

Box Lunch was served and a working lunch continued.

Denny highlighted the upcoming conferences that State Master Gardener Staff will be involved with. Denny will be a presenter at IMGC in Oregon July 10-14. Currently more than 1000 have registered and 1200 is the cap for attendance. The Upper Midwest Master Gardener Conference will be in Twin Cities MN in 2018 instead of Illinois. Laura and Cindy will be presenting at the National Extension Volunteer Conference in Asheville NC next week. They will be presenting about the *Growing Together* project. Many of the staff will be presenting and attending the American Society for Horticulture Science meetings in Hawaii in September.

Denny reviewed the National EMG Impact survey. Iowa and Upper Midwest states had a good return of surveys. The goal of the surveys is for all counties/states to collect the same type of impact data.

Denny reviewed the 2016 MG training and highlighted the upcoming 2017 training. The resource guide was revised for 2016 training – and is full color, and a new version of the workbook will be utilized for the 2017 training. Counties wishing to offer training should contact Denny ASAP to be indicated on the website as a county offering training. Online applications opened March 1. Cost is the same as last year– \$195, with \$50 remaining with the county office.

Megan passed around scorecards for the Search for Excellence applications. The committee members had reviewed the applications prior to the meeting. Committee members' scores were tallied to determine their average score. Positive and negative comments were

accumulated. They will be compiled and sent to the applicants. All of the projects accomplished great horticulture education in their communities. Projects with an average score of at least 80/100 will receive the award. Committee discussion included allowing more space for some answers. Consensus was that a scoring rubric, and a sample application need to be prepared for applicants to review before completing their application. The current application form in Qualtrics submits answers upon completion of each section. Applicants are encouraged to complete their answer on paper prior to computer entry OR resubmit as often as needed.

Next Steps include:

All counties are urged to have the 2017 Iowa Honey Queen present in their county. She wants to speak in each county this year. Her contact information will be sent to county coordinators.

In order to enter partial hours in the VRS, all Master Gardeners are reminded to enter a "0" before the decimal when they complete less than one hour in the VRS system.

All counties are encouraged to enter their MG tours and county centennial celebrations in the Master Gardener newsletter as upcoming events.

Next meeting of the State Master Gardener Advisory Committee will be November 3, 2017 at the same location.

Meeting adjourned at 2 pm.

Suzette Striegel, Secretary