

Garden Update

Week of April 18, 2022

Kathleen Cue, Nebraska Extension Horticulture Educator in Dodge County

National Volunteer Week

A shout out of appreciation goes to Nebraska Extension Master Gardener Volunteers (NEMGV) as we celebrate National Volunteer Week, April 17-23. NEMGVs are volunteers, recipients of Nebraska Extension's research-based education, which covers the gamut of horticulture topics, from insects to trees, and everything in between. NEMGVs are committed to their communities, volunteering their expertise to 4-H and other youth programs, working at community gardens, answering questions through Nebraska Extension's horticulture helpline, hosting Ask the Master Gardener tables at events, growing vegetables for the food insecure, and a host of other outreach activities. They are Nebraska Extension's boots-on-the-ground people who expand the University's educational opportunities for those who live in Nebraska.

Spring is a busy time for Nebraska Extension Master Gardener Volunteers. Here are just a few of the many activities going on in our area:

Dodge County and Washington County Master Gardener Volunteers are planning and planting for the Growing Together Nebraska (GTN) gardens, which provide vegetables to local food pantries. Lettuce, peas, onions, spinach, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, summer squash, winter squash, and melons are grown and distributed to the food insecure.

Dakota County Master Gardener Volunteers have completed the annual pruning of the fruit trees at the South Sioux City Community Orchard. The fruit grown here is an outreach effort to address nutritional needs of the community. NEMGVs oversee the activities of community volunteers who help at this garden, ensuring the fruit trees and small fruits will have a good yield.

Master Gardener Volunteers and retired Extension staff provide ongoing efforts to manage the pollinator gardens at the Tekamah Pollinator Garden in Burt County and Veterans Tribute Plaza and South Elementary School's pollinator gardens in Washington County. These gardens serve as teaching resources how best to help pollinators by planting flowering plants and reducing insecticide use. NEMGVs manage a food garden in Dakota County, a historic vegetable garden at Fort Atkinson State Historical Park in Washington County, and pollinator gardens in Dodge and Saunders Counties.

Nebraska Extension Master Gardeners teach. In Washington County, Burt County, and on the Omaha Reservation, public school teachers who are also Master Gardener volunteers, teach after-school and classroom gardening activities at school gardens, educating youth about pollinators, vegetable gardening, and tribal gardening customs.

Got a gardening question to ask? Master Gardener Volunteers provide one-on-one education to people in need of solving their horticulture problems. Answers specific to this region address issues of wildlife damage, insect pests, plant diseases, and best management practices. Call or email your local Extension Office to find Master Gardener Volunteer availability for the horticulture helpline.

Hats off to Nebraska Extension Master Gardener Volunteers!