

# Master Gardeners Make Life More Fragrant

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tested and must answer a certain number of gardening questions properly, Wolfe said. Also, they must go through an interview with an extension agent, she said.

"Usually we try to select enough people according to the number of projects that are started and the new ones that are being planned," said Wolfe.

After they are accepted into the program, the volunteers must receive 50 hours of training in classes taught by extension agents, specialists from Penn State University, and other Master Gardeners, she said.

Each week in those classes, she said, the participants study a different gardening topic. The topics include propagation, plant diseases, pruning, lawn care, care of ornamental plants, and similar knowledge.

Some of the study sessions have hands-on workshops, Wolfe said.

After the educational program is completed, Wolfe said, the participants must give 50 hours of service back to the community. That service has to pertain to something they have learned in the course, she said.

The gardens at Kings Gap are perhaps the most evident contribution the Master gardeners have made so far in the program.

The Kings Gap project is really

**KINGS GAP (Cumberland Co.)**  
— When visitors come to admire the wonderful herb gardens at this state park, they should leave thanking Cumberland County's Master Gardeners.

The local people who volunteer for the program not only get their hands dirty, they get their minds stimulated as well.

Ten of those volunteers were recognized for their green thumbs and their dedication to making life a little more pleasant and a little more fragrant during the 76th annual meeting of the Cumberland County Cooperative Extension.

Those people honored were Michael Dau, Karen Olson, Joan Baker, Marcia Thompson, Kathryn Grabowski, Ralph Negley, and Frank Kenski.

They are just a few of the people who have participated in the Master Gardener Program in this county since it was founded in 1988.

Kathy Wolfe, who runs the Master Gardener Program in the extension office, said the volunteers make a big commitment and devote a lot of hours to get their program certificate.

Before they are accepted into the program, volunteers are pre-



**Cumberland County Master Gardener Kathryn Grabowski works in the culinary herb garden the Master Gardener volunteers have made at the Kings Gap Environmental Education Center.**



**Master Gardener, Marcia Thompson, begins cleaning the medicinal garden, one of the four herbal gardens planted by the Cumberland County Master Gardeners at Kings Gap Environmental Education Center.**

a big teaching garden.

The Master Gardeners planted the herbs in four separate and specialized gardens in a circular area, said Master Gardeners Marcia Thompson and Kathryn Grabowski.

One garden is a fragrance garden, they said. They said the other gardens are a medicinal garden, a culinary garden and a garden filled with herbs that are used to make dyes.

Grabowski and Thompson said they hope to make the Kings Gap project even more attractive this year by placing a sundial in the center of the gardens.

Each of the gardens is taken care of by some of the Master Gardeners who already have graduated from the program and by participants who are just going through the program, they said.

Other projects the Master Gardeners are working on at Kings Gap are a compost demonstration course for home gardeners and the construction of a native and a wildlife garden.

Another new project they have

planned is a Plant Clinic to be held at the West Shore Library in Camp Hill. At that clinic people will be able to bring in plants that have diseases for advice and the Master Gardeners will answer gardening questions.

In the past year, Master Gardeners also presented more than 30 educational talks on wildflowers, perennials, herbs, water gardens, bonsai, pruning, plant problems and composting.

They helped youths in the county by judging in the botany division of the Capital Area Science Fair and by judging at the 4-H Fair. They also helped pilot the 4-H "Meet the Plants" project for fourth graders in two elementary schools in the Cumberland Valley School District.

Wolfe said there are about 30 volunteers in the program to date.

The volunteers come from all walks of life and all age groups, she said. There are homemakers, teachers and doctors in the programs, she said, adding that all you need is a little knowledge of gar-

dening and a lot of enthusiasm.

Wolfe said Cumberland County has an "extremely good" retention rate for people who become involved in the Master Gardener Program.

Approximately 90 percent return for more work after completing the program, she said.

Once a Master Gardener is certified they undergo an additional eight hours of training with the requirement of giving back another 20 hours of volunteer work to the community, Wolfe said.

Master Gardeners who return for the second year of the program have found their "niche" in the program and the projects that their fellow gardeners have planned, she said.

Their rewards for continuing in the program, Wolfe said, are that they gain more in-depth knowledge of a subject they love while they give a contribution back to their community and share their common interest with their fellow gardening enthusiasts.

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