

**Tennessee Master Gardener Search for Excellence  
2014 Application**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 31, 2014**

**NAME OF PROJECT:** Demonstration Gardens of Rutherford County/Flutter By Park

**NAME OF MG GROUP:** Master Gardeners of Rutherford County

**COUNTY (IES) :** Rutherford County

**MASTER GARDENER CONTACT:**

**NAME** Nancy Nelson

**EMAIL** building4future@bellsouth.net

**MASTER GARDENER COORDINATOR/EXTENSION STAFF:**

**NAME** Janie Becker

**TITLE** Master Gardener Coordinator, Farmer's Mkt. Mgr. & Ext. Agent

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**CATEGORY---MUST SELECT AND SUBMIT IN ONLY ONE CATEGORY**

Youth

Demonstration

Garden Workshop or

Presentation Community

Service Innovative

Project Research

Special Needs Audience

COMMENCEMENT DATE OF PROJECT: April 2010

**LIST THE NAMES OF MASTER GARDENERS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT.** Do not include their roles or any other individuals in this listing. *(Place the cursor in the box to type a name.)* You may attach an additional page if necessary.

**Project Leaders' Names:**

Nancy Nelson	Sherrill Vick
Judy McBrien	Anna Paddon
Beth Fedorowicz	Don Harrison
Richard Lee	Mark Murphy
Floyd Adams	Barbara Mullins
Les Heaberlin	Warren Anderson
Carol D. Reese	

**Number of Master Gardeners participating:** 25

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT** (include name, location, target audience, goals, and partnerships) 500 words or less.

**Demonstration Gardens- Lane Agricultural Park, Murfreesboro, TN** The Outdoor Classroom Pavilion was constructed in 2009 as a donation from Allied Waste & Republic Services, Co. It was underutilized and had minimal landscaping to improve the area. Rutherford County Master Gardeners wanted to develop the area surrounding the pavilion to provide examples of various garden styles (both vegetative and decorative), structures and landscaping to show what the typical homeowner could do on their own property. Each component stands alone and can easily be replicated in almost any home landscape.

The target audience of this project includes the residents of Rutherford County with a focus on inexperienced gardeners and children. We are looking for the family that wants to grow some of their own foods but doesn't know what to do. The home owner looking for landscaping inspiration to make their property more inviting. The less-abled person who once enjoyed gardening but is now finding it difficult. Children who have never experience planting a seed or eating a vegetable "straight from the garden".

Introducing children to gardening is an important goal of this area. We try to provide lessons which promote a healthy activity while introducing children gardening and educating them about pollinators and their importance in the environment. By understanding the role of pollinators in our environment, many children lose their fear of "bugs".

This area is used to provide hands-on teaching experience for Master Gardeners and interns. The gardens offer visual learning experience about gardening, insect problems and diseases. Many native plants have been used to educate visitors so they can make educated choices when purchasing plants. Being able to see what the plants look like when mature and how to use them has encouraged many gardeners to make more environmentally friendly choices when making plant selections

And finally, it provides a place of beauty to be enjoyed by visitors to the Lane Agri-Park grounds. With the approval of Rutherford County Extension, support of the staff in both leadership and muscle when needed, we are well under way to achieving these goals.

**DESCRIBE THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT.** 500 words or less.

Initially, the scope of this project was simply the installation of the Butterfly and Herb gardens to supplement the Outdoor Classroom. The interest shown by visitors and the community inspired the RCMG to expand the scope of the project.

2010 – Butterfly Garden was installed with plants donated by the TN Advocacy Board and RCMG's (individually). This portion of the garden is used to show how native plants can be used to provide both nectar and host plants for butterflies and other pollinators in a visually beautiful garden.

2011 – Herb Garden was added to provide examples of how to grow herbs and use them as edible landscaping. Herbs from the garden are used in cooking demonstrations and other classes during the farmers market, local chefs have used them in area restaurants.  
~ Compost barrels were installed.

A committee was formed in 2011 to develop an overall plan to expand the area which included making use of existing outdoor classroom, vineyard and neglected orchard. The plan was to develop a cohesive use for the area as a living outdoor teaching area.

The initial wish list was pared down to a logical progression of projects to provide a living learning area to local residents interested in improving their own gardening / landscaping ideas. It was decided that each year's MG intern class would complete a portion of the plan as part of their hands-on training. Classes formed a team; chose a project from the master plan, researched, designed and implemented the project as part of their classwork. This also allowed interns a resource for completing their volunteer hours requirement.

2012 – Installed three raised bed vegetable gardens to study the efficacy of various materials used to build beds. Concrete blocks, hay bales and cedar planks were chosen. Gardening methods used were square foot gardening, lasagna gardening and vertical gardening.

2013 – Installed rain gardens at lake to demonstrate the use of native plants for erosion control and stormwater management.

~Purchased netting to protect vineyard crop from birds.

~Purchased new fruit trees to replace damaged/ dying orchard trees.

2014 – Installed crape myrtles to be used to demonstrate pruning techniques as well as examples of sizes and varieties for use in home landscaping.

Rain barrels were installed on the pavilion to be used in watering the Butterfly Garden and Herb garden. One barrel uses a rain chain and the other a standard gutter extension.

A drip-tape system of irrigation was installed in the raised bed vegetable garden to demonstrate a more effective means of water conservation and to ease the watering demands of MG volunteers.

~ Installed garden shed and pergola with potting bench to be used for outdoor demonstrations.

~ Added crush and run walkways for handicap accessibility, outlined with landscape timbers.

~ Installed mushroom garden (donated by Master Gardener).

~ Planted fruits trees donated by Lowe's.  
We will be installing a 3 bin compost system later this fall.

**HOW HAS THE PROJECT BEEN FUNDED AND HOW HAVE THOSE FUNDS BEEN SPENT?** 500 Words or less.

The project has been funded thru the RCMG general budget and Master Gardener program funds through Rutherford County Extension.

As each project was completed it became a part of the Master Gardener budget to supply any future maintenance. Master Gardeners / Individual MG Association members donated some of the plants from divisions in their own gardens and materials needed to complete the gardens. Limestone rocks from Master Gardener's personal property have been donated to outline the Butterfly and Herb garden for a natural attractive border. The Rutherford County Extension Service donated materials, labor and crape myrtles. The MG Association had fundraisers, including a silent auction during our annual plant swap, to provide any additional monies needed.

To date, the funds have been spent on plants, seeds, trees, walkway materials, pergola materials, garden shed, supplies and tools to furnish the shed, irrigation materials, netting, raised bed materials, soil, mulch, soil amendments. Many items have been donated by individual Master Gardeners. Labor has been provided by Master Gardeners with assistance from Extension Staff (moving crush & run for paths).

**DESCRIBE THE OUTCOMES OF THIS PROJECT. HOW HAS IT AUGMENTED LEARNING, INCREASED KNOWLEDGE OR CHANGED PRACTICES TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE? INCLUDE THE METHODS YOU USED TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT.** These impacts could be economical, educational, environmental, health or community based. 500 words or less.

During the year, the gardens are visited by residents of all ages who admire the plants and butterfly garden. On Farmers' Market days (Tuesday and Fridays), families regularly visit the Demonstration Area to learn how to start a garden. Twice a week thru the summer months, Rutherford Environmental Education uses the outdoor classroom for children-oriented programs. The gardens and irrigation systems are used to demonstrate better use of water resources, encouraging pollinators and recycling to create compost. These programs are aimed toward families with young children. There are anywhere from 10 to 50 visitors to the gardens per market day. The gardens have also been utilized by Rutherford County Extension Agents for vegetable gardening workshops and 4-H activities.

Vegetables from the garden are donated to Meaningful Gleaning of Rutherford County, an outside volunteer organization that picks up produce from the farmers market to be donated to local food banks. 300 pounds of grapes from our orchard were donated this year to a local church that shared them with St. Mary's Convent in Sewanee, TN to make jelly and sacramental wine.

One of our largest public events is Adventures in Agriculture (sponsored by Farm Bureau). Families,

school groups and individuals attend this free event. MG volunteers set up at the demonstration garden to teach about various gardening methods and to answer basic gardening questions. We encourage gardening as a family activity and have had to increase the number of our volunteers staffing the area in order to answer questions from the residents.

- We hold composting activities for children.
- Show parents and children how to make paper pots and plant seedlings providing the newspaper and seedlings for this activity.
- Teach about butterfly gardening using a display of the life cycle of a butterfly and hand out a list of plants to start a butterfly garden. Children make a paper butterfly to take with them.
- Demonstrations on self-watering containers, container gardening, planting a vegetable garden, and dividing perennials are also included.

This event has an attendance of approximately 2,500 people per year based on physical count of attendees. We have participated for the last three years.

Working in the gardens give MG's who are hesitant to teach in a classroom or speak in public the opportunity to share their gardening knowledge in a one-on-one setting. When we work in the garden, visitors attending other programs at Agri-Park and from surrounding neighborhoods walk over to see what is going on. This offers a relaxed atmosphere for the visitor and the MG to talk and answer questions.