

Master gardeners honor new class of graduates

News Transcript – Dec. 7, 2005

COLTS NECK — The Master Gardeners of Monmouth County, a group of gardeners dedicated to educating the public about horticulture and the environment through community service, recently celebrated the class of 2005 graduation with a covered-dish supper at Hominy Hill Golf Course.

According to a press release from the county, Master Gardeners advocate using the least toxic methods for pest control. They learn the life cycles of pests so that if a chemical is required, the timing will be correct for the best control results.

Called “Integrated Pest Management,” Master Gardeners share this knowledge with the public.

“There’s so many good things happening in Monmouth County that, unless you’re a part of the Master Gardeners program, you are not fully aware of it,” Freeholder Theodore J. Narozanick said at the Nov. 10 graduation. “The Master Gardeners are among the shining stars of the county.”

Applications are now being accepted for the Master Gardeners Class of 2006, scheduled to begin Feb. 23. Those interested are invited to contact the Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension of Monmouth County at (732) 431-7260 to obtain an application, which must be filled out by Jan. 1.

Master Gardeners go through extensive horticulture training in addition to their volunteer work. After an initial 60 hours of training and 60 hours of donated volunteer time, they must remain certified by volunteering 40 hours a year in various capacities. This can include working on the Helpline in Freehold, helping to solve garden problems, or performing community service at schools and other facilities, including caring for Deep Cut Gardens and the gardens at Thompson Park.

“The park system appreciates the efforts of the expanding corps of Master Gardeners who help keep the park system green and growing,” said James Truncer, superintendent of the Monmouth County Park System. “Volunteers are central to the park system’s commitment to providing opportunities for our citizens to be involved and make a difference in their community.”

Richard Obal, Monmouth County’s agricultural agent, Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension, commended the graduates for giving more than 2,000 hours of service to the community and the entire Master Gardener membership for more than 9,000 hours of service this year alone. He said the Master Gardeners of Monmouth County, in existence since 1999, has invested more than 74,000 hours of volunteer service to Monmouth County since its inception.

Ron Kudile of the biology department at Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, said, "We are very appreciative of the Master Gardeners of Monmouth County because they, along with Freeholder Narozanick, have been instrumental in supporting the Horticulture Certificate Program at Brookdale."

The graduates are Gail Abrams of Little Silver; Jill Barba of Freehold; John Bauer of Ocean Grove; Dale Claffey of Neptune City; Denise Corrigan-Dunne of Marlboro; Maureen Daley of Brick; Ginny Dinyovszky of Brielle; Gloria Gross of Middletown; Michelle Hampton of Oceanport; Patti Jackson of Manalapan; Chris Keen of Belford; Nancy Koenig of Belmar; Terri Levy of Middletown; Mary MacDonald of Neptune; Marsha Montgomery of Englishtown; Pam Murphy of Lake Como; Jeanne Patterson of Freehold; Loretto Rizzo of Colts Neck; Carol Smith of Middletown; Claire Solidum of Marlboro; Nellie Steltzer of Belmar; Egle Tschinkel of Holmdel; Leonor Urena of Aberdeen; Joanne Van Stolk of Manasquan; and Joan Walsh of Fair Haven.

Eight graduates won 100-hour milestone awards for service: John Bauer, Denise Corrigan-Dunne, Gloria Gross, Nancy Koenig, Terri Levy, Carol Smith, Egle Tschinkel and Joanne Van Stolk.

In addition, 11 veteran Master Gardeners also earned 100-hour milestone awards. For 250 hours of service, 17 veteran Master Gardeners won awards. Lifetime Awards for 1,000 hours of service were conferred upon four Master Gardeners. The new milestone award for 1,500 service hours was bestowed upon eight Master Gardeners.

The Award of Excellence from the Master Gardeners Association of New Jersey was presented to Jan Mundy of Freehold (class of 2004), and Kim O'Neill of Middletown and Carol Davies of Belmar (class of 2003) for outstanding service to the Master Gardener Association and the community.

Special mention was made of the Master Gardener International Award of Excellence given to the Master Gardeners of Monmouth County. The award was made possible through the efforts of Jayne Cleveland (class of 2001) of Tinton Falls and the Junior Gardener Program Committee at Deep Cut Gardens.

The Master Gardeners of Monmouth County is sponsored by Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension, in cooperation with the Monmouth County Park System and Brookdale Community College.