

New master gardeners ready to serve county

News Transcript

Twenty-five Monmouth County residents became certified Master Gardeners at a graduation ceremony held Nov. 18 at the Hominy Hill Golf Center, Colts Neck.



"This class of Master Gardeners embraced a very special and very timely project," Monmouth County Freeholder Director Lillian G. Burry said at the graduation. "They prepared the soil, planted the seeds and harvested the produce for the Open Door program in Freehold. Through the 'Plant a Row for the Hungry' program, this class made a real impact and difference in the lives of our families in need."

In logging 800 hours of service with Open Door, a Freehold-based food pantry, the 2010 class of Master Gardeners grew and donated 2,400 pounds of garden produce valued at \$5,000, according to a press release.

The 2010 graduates are: Gordon Boak, Colts Neck; Marilyn Boak, Colts Neck; Geoff Bray, Tinton Falls; Candice Burke, Colts Neck; Warren Carretta, Ocean Township; Joan Cox, Oceanport; Kathy Davison, Shrewsbury; Bill Gerth, Shrewsbury; Linda Greene, Asbury Park; Liz Hespe, Middletown; Helmi Konderock, Monmouth Beach; Carol Long, Colts Neck; David Levinsky, Marlboro; Terry Marotta, Eatontown; Carol Mellaci, Long Branch; Susan Merritt, Freehold; Anne Quatrochi, Manalapan; Abby Scheer, Ocean Township; Wally Seeley, Freehold; Bob Strempek, Howell; Kathleen Turso, Spring Lake; Penny Towey, Holmdel; Joel Whitman, Fair Haven; Elaine Alston Whittaker, Asbury Park; and Len Yoder, Freehold.

The Master Gardeners are now certified gardening experts because they have completed a course of classroom and hands-on training in plant biology, propagation, soil science and disease and pest control. The trainees then began sharing their knowledge with others by conducting garden lectures, demonstrations, school and community gardening projects, and answering calls on the county's "horticulture helpline."

“This 12th Master Gardener class has been working with the best in the horticultural field – Rutgers University faculty and Cooperative Extension Service professional staff, while completing their outreach efforts,” said Rich Obal, Agricultural and Research Agent for Monmouth County’s Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service Office.

Eight new graduates won awards for 100 hours of service: Gordon Boak, Joan Cox, Geoff Bray, Kathy Davison, Candice Burke, Bill Gerth, Warren Carretta and Carol Mellaci. Eight other new graduates won awards for 250 hours of service: Geoff Bray, Bob Strempek, Wally Seeley, Kathleen Turso, Joel Whitman and Elaine Alston Whittaker.

The 2010 class presented Burry with an honorary Master Gardener certificate in appreciation of her unwavering support for Master Gardener program, according to the press release.

In addition, eight veteran Master Gardeners also earned 100-hour milestone awards: Jerrilyn Bean, Matawan; Pat Halligan, Manalapan; Susan Lowe Kayes, Millstone Township; Isabelle Koren, Howell; Marvin Koren, Howell; Kristina Latimer, Shrewsbury; Dawn Nahory, Lincroft; and Mimi Wise, Colts Neck.

For 250 hours of service, 13 Master Gardeners received recognition: Larry Canale, Rumson; Joe Chapple, Neptune; Barbara Drescher, Tinton Falls; Carol Farber, Freehold; George Hemsey, Howell; Dorsey Latza, Belmar; Joyce Maraziti, Manasquan; Dennis McNamara, Keyport; Joanne Murtie, Neptune; Barbara Pieszcynski, Eatontown; Patty Miller Pittman, Little Silver; Jean Saba, Rumson; and Vici Stoeckel, Atlantic Highlands.

For 500 hours of service, nine veteran Master Gardeners won awards: Semmes Brightman, Shrewsbury; Larry Canale, Rumson; Carolyn Heuser, Freehold; Nancy Koenig, Belmar; Chervine Lamb, Neptune; Peter McIntyre, Matawan; Carol Palmer, Ocean; Nellie Steltzer, Belmar; and Trish Sullivan, Morganville.

Lifetime awards for 1,000 hours of service were conferred upon seven veteran Master Gardeners: Carol Chandler, Howell; Dennise Corrigan-Dunne, Marlboro; Tom Lang, Ocean Township; Sue Malmi, Red Bank; Anita Meeks, Ocean Grove; Sheryl Powers, Ocean Township; and Ellen Simonetti, Marlboro.

Eight Master Gardeners achieved 1,500 service hours honors: Barbara Bandstra, Wall Township; Cliff Bandstra, Wall Township; John Bauer, Ocean Grove; Howard Bodner, Middletown; Ronnie Leibowitz, Manalapan; Bob Magovern, Wall Township; Bob Michaels, Hazlet; and Jeanne Patterson, Freehold.

Lifetime achievement for 2,000 hours of Master Gardener services was reached by Estelle Lumer, Aberdeen; Patrice McCoy, Freehold; and Jan Mundy, Freehold.

Honors for 3,000 hours went to Sheila Eppinger, Brielle, and Joe Nagy, Middletown. Honors for 5,000 hours went to Evelin Gaffney, Rumson, and Irene Wanat, Rumson.

The Master Gardener program, conducted throughout the United States and Canada, is a two-part educational effort in which avid gardeners are provided many hours of intense home horticulture training. In return, they “pay back” local university extension agents through volunteerism.

In New Jersey, the program is a cooperative effort of Rutgers University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the county freeholders. Monmouth County’s program involves the county office of Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Brookdale Community College and the Monmouth County Park System.

The program is accepting applications for 2011. There is a \$250 fee to cover material and program costs. Applications can be downloaded from www.visitmonmouth.com and are also available from the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service at 4000 Kozloski Road, Freehold Township, or by calling 732-431- 7260. The deadline to apply is Jan. 3, 2011.