Demonstration Gardens
- # of gardens: 7
- # of direct adult contacts: 1,993
- # of direct youth contacts: 2,145

School Gardens
- # of gardens: 22
- # of direct adult contacts: 654
- # of direct youth contacts: 3,450

Public Presentations
- # of sessions given: 32
- # of direct adult contacts: 1,004

Kiosk
- # of kiosks offered: 23
- # of direct adult contacts: 2,587

Soil Testing
- # of events hosted: 24
- # of tests conducted: 56
- # of direct adult contacts: 302

TOTAL DIRECT CONTACTS: 6,540 adults
5,595 children

Food Donations:

Roger Williams Park Produce Donation Garden
- Pounds of food donated: 2,102 (29% increase from 2017)
- Donation recipients: Providence Rescue Mission
  St. Vincent de Paul Society

Roger Williams Park Botanical Center Flavor Lab Garden
- Pounds of food donated: 230
- Donation recipients: Providence Rescue Mission
  St. Vincent de Paul Society

House of Hope: Shippen Avenue Garden
- Pounds of food donated: 140
- Donation recipients: House of Hope: Fair Street residence
**2018 Highlights:**

**Providence School Garden Initiative:**

In 2018, URI Cooperative Extension provided a range of services to 13 elementary, middle and high schools in the Providence Public School District, including:

1. Refinement of school garden teams, assisting schools with planning for integrated garden programs, and design of vegetable gardens, edible forest gardens and pollinator gardens;
2. Assistance with acquisition of supplemental grants for garden materials and supplies to enhance support and sustainability of garden programs; and
3. In-garden professional development training sessions to increase teacher comfort with using a garden as a teaching platform.

**Project Highlights:**

**Produce Donation Garden (PDG) & *NEW* Flavor Lab at the Roger Williams Park Botanical Center, Providence**

Since 2011, the community garden in Roger Williams Park (RWP) has served as a community connector, serving local resident gardeners, the general public and volunteers. This year, an indoor greenhouse garden was added to the project scope. The RWP Botanical Center’s new Flavor Lab has been a success from the start. The concept for this garden was to have a year-round vegetable garden to extend the outdoor Produce Donation Garden’s growing season, a first for the URIMGP!

The Flavor Lab harvested over 230 pounds from the garden, with more coming. The cold weather crops (lettuce, peas, carrots, etc.) did very well, while the summer crops (tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, leeks) did amazingly well with above average temperatures throughout the summer. The Flavor Lab was a highlight for school tours and RWP Botanical Center visitors. Students learned how their food is grown; many were provided with a sample of peas, carrots, lettuce or whatever was growing at the time of their visits.

The gardens added signage with images of seedlings and mature plants to help new volunteers distinguish plants from weeds. The PDG conducted eight formal workshops this year on topics including:

- Controlling pests
- Food Safety
- Utilizing all Parts of a Plant
- Urban Container Gardening
- Planning and Prepping a Garden
Information about sowing, thinning and harvesting was also available to workshop participants and garden visitors.

Volunteers provided guidance to the Providence Elder Housing Project to improve and rehab their community gardens and provided an initial gardening library for the residents to use. As in 2017, Perspectives Corporation and their leaders worked alongside volunteers, who assisted four mentees and three trainers at three plots in the Community Garden. The mentees and trainers were taught how to plant and care for such plants as tomatoes, zucchini, strawberries, blueberries and sunflowers. Unfortunately, the ground hogs feasted on the cauliflower and cabbage!

Volunteers also continuously interacted with RWP Community Gardeners throughout the season, answering their technical questions as we have since 2011.

Recipients of produce donations were continually invited to the garden to learn more about the food they receive and how it is produced. Volunteer leaders developed teams of two to four people who were on site seven days a week, which greatly improved communication on a day-to-day basis. Eight URIMGP interns volunteered with us throughout the season. The PDG received an honorable mention as the Central Region’s Project of the Year for the second year in a row.

Display Gardens
at the Roger Williams Park Botanical Center, Providence

The Roger Williams Park Botanical Center (RWPBC) is a facility governed by the Providence Parks & Recreation Department. It is open to the public six days a week; many opportunities exist to expand outreach to the public using the space. The RWPBC outdoor garden has a strong collection of New England native and other sustainable plants. In 2018, over 400 plants were labeled with their Latin and common names, country of origin and cultivar. No pesticides were used in the garden at any point during the year.

The RWPBC is a superb venue for public educational workshops, since the gardens offer the public ideas that they can implement in their home gardens. The RWPBC Display Garden project team held five Saturday workshops on topics including:

- Rose Pruning
- Insects in the Garden
- Flower Pressing
- Pruning Perennials
- All About Dahlias

Master Gardener volunteers interacted informally with visitors and shared their passion for the garden, their knowledge about best gardening practices, and information about the plants. The volunteers also
mentored 13 non-neurotypical young adults from Perspectives, teaching perennial pruning techniques, how to care for a garden and other gardening skills.

Many of the display garden volunteers worked as docents in the All About Plants Program, an interactive opportunity to share with elementary students the importance of plants in our lives. We also worked with students from Wheeler School mulching the gardens, instructing the students on best practices for plant care, and providing a tour of the tropical plants in the greenhouses. During the URIMGP Open House volunteers held a scavenger hunt of native New England plants and offered information on 16 natives.

**Smith’s Castle**
North Kingstown, RI

Smith’s Castle was built in 1678, replacing an earlier structure. It is one of the oldest houses in RI and the original site of Roger Williams’ and, later, Richard Smith’s trading post. Now a museum run by the Cocumscussoc Association, the URIMGP partners with the museum to care for and expand the historic gardens on the property. The URIMGP continues to participate in our host’s three festivals, including the popular Strawberry Fest, offering garden tours, kiosk materials and soil testing. The URIMGP Smith’s Castle demonstration garden was also featured as part of the Project Open House in June 2018.

Smith Castle’s visitors are members of the public who come to tour the house, families who attend the three festivals, and many school groups. Garden education topics for the public continue to be the historical use of the various gardens and connecting that use to modern day practices and challenges. The main garden is showcased as an example of biodiversity, as it is a combination of native and exotic plants and shrubs.

Volunteers developed a scavenger hunt for the public to emphasize the variety of plants included in the garden, and two games for youth visitors during the Project Open House to emphasize the importance of pollination. Regarding soil conservation, handouts relating to Colonial and Native American gardening, stressing no-till gardening, dense planting and raised beds were developed, and a display booth where we showed techniques for dyeing yarn was developed as well.

**House of Hope**
Warwick

The URIMGP House of Hope team partners with the House of Hope Development Corporation at two of their locations: Shippen Ave. and Fair St., both in Warwick, where low income and former homeless clients are living. Volunteers installed a perennial bed with many native plants around the perimeter of the veggie garden at Shippen. The food grown at the Shippen garden was chosen by the Fair St. residents and, when harvested, was given to them each week. Some of the residents had not seen several types of the veggies planted at Shippen
and did not know how to prepare them – it was a great teaching opportunity to teach food preparation and cooking.

The residents at Fair St. were also taught how to dry and utilize herbs, when to harvest various vegetables, how some veggies like lettuce and scallions can be re-rooted, and fertilize and care for house plants. Volunteers learned how to build a wheelchair accessible raised bed, providing them with a new experience they can share with other gardeners. Several of the residents planted the new bed and cared for the plants throughout the growing season. Construction of raised beds for the 26’ x 20’ main garden to be completed next year per specs that were approved by the Warwick Historical Society was started as well.

Desourdy School Gardens

Gilbert Stuart Middle School
Providence

Students rehabbed a perennial garden removing debris, weeds and invasive roots. They planted donated perennials and erected fencing around the garden. On Earth Day the RI Tree Council visited the school and donated a linden tree which the students planted. The linden replaced a dogwood tree they had planted in conjunction with the Empowerment Factory in the Fall of 2017, which later was vandalized beyond saving. Also this year, they planted a red maple. The students’ civic mindedness was also on display in May when they participated in a restoration project along Huntington Avenue Parkway. Students planted several varieties of trees donated by the City of Providence; Mayor Elorza attended the event. These outside groups, including Groundworks RI, played an important role in teaching the students about the importance of nature and plants, and the impact they have on our lives. Next year we hope to receive a grant to build a vegetable garden on the school grounds.

Robert Kennedy Elementary School
Providence

Meeting on Friday afternoons after school, students became nature detectives exploring such topics as (1) soil composition-how it felt, smelled, was it dark or light; (2) bugs and their habitat – plants they like, how they get around, where they live (in the ground, on plants. etc); and (3) plant structure – leaves rough or smooth, type of flowers, number of petals. They also painted a garden mural on the brick wall at the back of the garden. The students planted the veggie garden using bags of potting soil as the garden beds. All in all, they learned how to look for patterns and draw conclusions from them; how to collect and organize data; and how to work as a team.

Stony Lane Elementary
North Kingstown

This year saw a great leap forward for Stony Lane’s gardens. Some of their successes include:

- Setting up an Outdoor Classroom Committee comprised of teachers, staff, parent coordinators and volunteers, and discussing new initiatives to be undertaken;
• Coordination of specific events such as the Garden Club membership project (twenty-six 3-5 grders), the three sisters project (twenty 4th graders); and
• Coordination of four family work sessions and summer sessions two times per week during the summer break.

This group creates a more fluid channel of information flow which in turn creates more new opportunities for the Outdoor Classroom. Other successes included expanding our garden bed space by over 200 sq. ft. and adding one cold frame garden. We are in the process of adding irrigation, more cold frames, row covers and a wash sink thanks to a grant received this year. We donated over 400 pounds of fresh produce to the North Kingstown Food Pantry. Educational activities in the Outdoor Classroom area for Pop-Up lessons included cold frame gardening, potato buckets, plant parts and pollination, micro-greens, hydroponic solutions, safe harvesting practices, and weights and measures.

Waddington Elementary
East Providence

Educational activities the students participated in this year were a nature scavenger hunt with kindergarteners; weather and worm observations; examined soil, habitat and water cycle; conducted a bug hunt determining insect order and pollinators; made pollinator tools to test on flowers; drew insects we observed; and how to make compost. Students learned the different parts of insects, what pollinators accomplish in the garden, food webs, bioaccumulations, how to compost and grow veggies organically, what animals and birds need in their habitat, and trying new foods. Some of our successes this year other than above were more teachers using the garden to do outdoor lessons with Foss kits and starting a “digging” area to promote cooperation and responsibility among students. As always, kale chips and mint tea were very popular!