PUBLIC EDUCATION STATISTICS:

**Demonstration Gardens**
- # of gardens: 10
- # of direct adult contacts: 1,813
- # of direct youth contacts: 1,588

**School Gardens**
- # of gardens: 9
- # of direct adult contacts: 775
- # of direct youth contacts: 1,005

**Public Presentations**
- # of sessions given: 5
- # of direct adult contacts: 153

**Kiosk**
- # of kiosks offered: 29
- # of direct adult contacts: 1,407

**Soil Testing**
- # of events hosted: 20
- # of tests conducted: 321
- # of direct adult contacts: 158

**TOTAL DIRECT CONTACTS:**
- 4,306 adults
- 2,593 children

**FOOD DONATIONS:**

Mount Hope Farm Grow4Good, Norman Bird Sanctuary Good Gardens, Great Friends Community Garden
- Pounds of food donated: 3,867
- Donation recipients: Local soup kitchens and food pantries
**Project Highlights:**

**Rhode Island Veterans’ Home**

Bristol

Our mission is to serve those who served. URI Master Gardeners and other volunteers continued to fulfill that goal in 2018. The new Veterans’ Home opened this spring; and Master Gardeners again returned to provide plants, flowers, soil testing and inspiration to our state’s military veterans. John Twomey and his team planned new raised beds for each of the 6 new modules; and with help by Rudi’s Rangers, construction of the beds was made on April 28 at the new Veterans’ Home. Soil, new plants, and weekly care followed with the expected results achieved; the veterans, their family visitors and the staff are again pleased, proud and helpful in keeping the raised beds weeded, pruned and watered.

Educational presentations included monthly soil testing with educational recommendations on-site. We discussed clients’ soil, plant advice and helpful resources both on line and handouts. We also spoke to several residents and staff about the plants in the raised beds. As a demonstration, we planted pollinators in the raised beds, all of which are perennials. Discussions on importance of pollinators in gardens and for the environment in general were covered.

At John’s initiative and dedicated persistence, the Veterans Administrator approved the initiative to procure and construct a new greenhouse on-site in the new garden field area. Rudi Hempe drafted and submitted a grant request. Approval of $95,000 arrived in November to procure and build a state-of-the-art structure that will be handicap-accessible, heated, ventilated and have water and tool storage readily available daily for veterans, family visitors, Master Gardeners and staff. Minor additional funds to complete the project will be sought from other generous Rhode Island Veterans organizations.

**Grow4Good Garden**

at Mount Hope Farm, Bristol

The handicap-accessible Grow4Good garden covers over 11,000 square feet of space, with approximately 5,000 square feet devoted to providing ready access to those with mobility difficulties and 2,500 square feet devoted to growing produce for donation to the East Bay Food Pantry. In 2018, 2,256 pounds of produce were donated. An educational highlight was the time spent with students from Roger Williams University’s Feinstein Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement. As part of their volunteer effort, in addition to learning about the URI Master Gardener Program, plants that we grow and how we help local families in need by providing produce to the East Bay Food Pantry, they also learned a little about construction when they assisted with the building of a weed crib to hold all of the weeds and other plant waste generated by the Grow4Good and Pollinator gardens. It was time well spent as the students learned about the many methods available to give back to a community.
Governor Bradford Garden
at Mount Hope Farm, Bristol

The gardens at Governor Bradford House cover almost 2,000 square feet of space and are made up of four different gardens containing 12 garden beds. The flower beds contain over 40 types of pollinator and ornamental plants along with a countless number of shrubs. The beautiful, productive herb garden alone has over 30 types of herbs where visitors are encouraged to use the senses of sight, touch, smell and taste to help learn about the different herbs. We held classes on Summer Pruning and taught a number of informal visitors about how to maintain sustainable gardens. In addition to our Project Open House where we had many visitors comes through and on which the project leader did a couple of TV segments, we also spent time with the Farm’s 4H students as well as their summer campers from Camp Wetu.

The Kiosk and Soil pH Testing are held monthly on the second Saturday of April to October during the Farmers Market. Educational and training sessions are held during winter to plan yearly procurement and planting schedule.

Prescott Farm
Middletown

Colonial farming of vegetables, herbs and land stewardship practices are our focus, as observed by the general public, gardeners, land owners, tourists and families with young children. Over 429 adults and 276 youth learned from our Sunday workdays, plant tags in the herb and vegetable garden beds, lectures, soil testing, kiosks and tours.

This year we donated over 622 lbs. of produce to local food banks.

For our Land Stewardship focus:
- We used straw and chopped leaves to demonstrate water conservation.
- We planted a native flower bed provided by the Master Gardeners.
- Gary Casabona, for the second year in a row, led a group of the public and volunteers through the property pointing out native plants and the benefit they have for our local pollinators. His walk also included suggestions of other natives that could be introduced to the property and one’s gardens.
- Our volunteers have one-on-one contact with the public on a weekly basis when working at Prescott Farm. Though we have our weekly chores, whenever a visitor is on the property, a volunteer will engage them in conversation and answer any questions about the property or gardening in general.
- Most of our volunteers are well-versed in the history of the property, our parent organization the Newport Restoration Foundation, and organic gardening techniques. Colonial gardening is also widely discussed with all groups that visit. Topics, including what the colonists would have
Our scheduled lecture series, which occurs the first Sunday of each month, included:

- April - Myth Busters About Common Gardening Myths by Colette Amendolara
- May - Interpreting Soil Tests by Garry Holmstrom
- June - Colonial Herbs and Their Uses by Johanna Becker
- July - Natives and Pollinators by Gary Casabona of the NRCS
- August - Three Sisters Gardening Technique overview and a discussion on RI Flint corn by Susan Estabrook and George the Adamsville Miller
- September - Managing Soil Health and Using Cover Crops by Roger Laberge and Susan Estabrook
- October - Colonial Foodways by Jeff Richards

**Middletown Library Community Garden**

Our clients are local gardeners, representing many ethnic groups with their favorite vegetables, who want a place to grow vegetables, work together and learn.

Master Gardeners held two educational presentations inside the library. In the garden, we held a spring soil testing event where soil from most of the 33 garden beds were tested, as well as 10-15 members of the public who came to have a soil test and who were unaware of the community garden's existence.

We launched the season on April 21 and introduced new gardeners to the best practices regarding pest control, rain barrels, the use of compost and the rules of the Community Garden. Demonstration of planting techniques and small-scale gardening was covered during the plant distribution when community garden members received donated plants from the URI Veggie Green House on May 24. On that day, gardeners were also shown the RI Planting Calendar and directed to the Master Gardener website to download their copies. We planted the Garden in a Box as a group on May 26, along with a discussion on pollinators and the importance of growing natives, hardening off and why these particular plants were chosen. On July 24, Johanna Vietry gave an educational talk on how to plan and plant household rain gardens. On September 5, Vivian Shaull gave an instructional presentation on fall lawn care.

As a group, we planted the native "Garden in a Box". While doing so, we taught about the purpose of the plants being able to attract pollinators and the importance of growing natives. We taught that there is a place for ornamentals in a vegetable garden setting; and we learned these plants...
are gorgeous and thrive when well-watered. On Saturday mornings when gardeners are working, we taught weeding techniques, discussed why pesticides are banned from use, and the organic products that help with land stewardship. To set an example, the library purchased a tank of organic plant fertilizer; and we distributed some to each gardener with instructions on diluting it and proper feeding, while explaining why this was preferable to using chemicals. We taught about mindful water use by discussing how fortunate we were to have water from the Middletown Fire Department.

Great Friends Community Garden
Newport

This was a good second year as a Master Gardener Project; and it is well received by the children, parents, and community of Newport. Clients at the garden are mainly children as well as community members involved in the community garden.

We taught about gardening to the children of the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center’s after-school program and summer program. Our emphasis was on the importance of pollinators, how to plant, care for and harvest vegetables, some fruits and the biological parts of plants.

Land Stewardship is our big priority. We worked with the children in the garden to teach them about the importance of pollinators like bees and butterflies, as well as read stories about the life cycle of monarchs. We watered the garden when necessary and showed the children how to know when the soil received enough water.

We coordinated multiple art projects with the gardening and labeling of plants. Everyone had fun and learned about growing their own food and the rewards of donating food. The theme one of the children provided was ‘Sharing is Caring’.

The community garden manager noted that when she was at the garden tending her own plot, she overhead the children teaching each other some of the lessons and objectives that we presented to them in our class. The children were very enthusiastic about it, too!

Newport Harbor Walk
Newport

The 2.5 mile Newport Harbor Walk Project’s purpose is to re-introduce and celebrate the beauty and diversity of native RI plants that have been lost. This was due to the overdevelopment of the Newport waterfront, while at the same time protecting and promoting public access to the shore. Over 2,000 adults and 100 youth learned from the Master Gardener Newport Harbor Walk Project this year. Many thousand others visited, observed, read and were inspired by the creative use of native pollinators grown in used dinghies and in our first rain garden, with more to come.
In 2017 and 2018, the Harbor Walk Project helped the city of Newport plan, install, and maintain a small demonstration rain garden at King Park. King Park Day was established in 2017 where the public was invited to participate in the rain garden planting. At the 2018 King Park Day, URI Master Gardeners gave away over 200 free native RI plants, along with 40 free rain barrels that found new homes in the flood-prone neighborhood. At Mary Ferrazzoli Park on Long Wharf, a small pollinator pocket park was created right next to the Louis Javits State Fishing Pier. These two gardens were done in collaboration with the RI Green Infrastructure Coalition and the City of Newport in order to help educate local neighborhoods, both on sea level rise and storm water mitigation and how rain gardens and small gardens with the right plants can make a difference both in resiliency and mitigation.

The King Park demonstration rain garden shows people how to harvest rainwater that flows from a roof’s surface and downspout as usable water for irrigating a garden. This garden has issues with both stormwater and sea water inundation and is an ongoing experiment in growing plants in less than optimum conditions. These native plants, when planted in combination with other pollinator plants, create an ecological system along the shore that is natural and sustainable, even though the plantings are done in a somewhat unconventional manner. Public education events included kiosk, one in-garden workshop, a series of regularly scheduled in-garden workshops, guided tours, plant tags, local press coverage that increased public interest and participation in the events.

**Mabel’s Garden**

at Norman Bird Sanctuary, Middletown

Mabel’s Garden hosted two formal workshops this season: one emphasizing designing native plants to attract wildlife and the second workshop in collaboration with NBS educational staff titled, “Creating Habitat Homes for Bees, Birds and Butterflies”. Attendees learned about native plant relationships with insects which migrating birds and resident birds depend on for food sources. Participants observed monarch butterfly caterpillars, not just in the NBS meadows, but also in Mabel’s Garden on Common milkweed and Butterfly weed. Program attendees viewed a native plant garden design slide show to help launch their own garden planning. In Mabel’s Garden they asked questions about our formal and informal design plan, and inquired about growing and maintenance tips for their own home gardens. Several attendees shared feedback about the changes they made to their gardens based on our programs and some returned for the second program. At the Harvest Fair URI Master Gardeners gave informal garden tours.

URI Master Gardeners created a new native plant binder brochure describing 40 of our native plants with photos in Mabel’s Garden for visitors. We have 20 new permanent plant labels to highlight some
of the featured plants from the brochure. We also developed a native plant insect interaction chart based on one by Heather Holm for 50 of Mabel’s Garden native plants that show how pollinators and insects rely on food and habitat.

Master Gardeners installed a total of 136 additional native plants including some new mid-season flowering plants. In spite of the long, hot dry summer, the native plant garden flourished with minimal watering. This drought-tolerant aspect of many native plants was always mentioned in our educational discussions with the public.

The Good Gardens
at Norman Bird Sanctuary, Middletown

Located at the Norman Bird Sanctuary, there are 325 acres of diverse habitats and trails to inspire diverse audiences to enjoy, appreciate and care about and care for the environment. The Good Gardens is an organic herb, vegetable and perennial garden that offers a rich garden teaching space for those interested in learning about horticulture, native plants, sustainable gardening, food literacy, land stewardship and habitat preservation. This project has 18 raised vegetable/fruit beds, 2 herb/flower beds, pollinator/native beds, a compost area and a hoop house.

With the first full growing season as a Master Gardener project, the Good Gardens grew 959 pounds of produce and had 1,459 direct contact visitors. In 2019, we plan to set up a potato growing experiment and a year-round hoop house planting schedule.

Newly started in mid-2017, over 64 adults and 597 youth directly learned from our Master Gardener Project. We produced approximately 300 lbs. of produce for MLK Center in Newport, animal ambassadors, campers and Harvest Fair attendees. At the hoop house, we taught creating educational signage, brainstorming on interactive garden and education.

Taylor Point Restoration
Jamestown

Taylor Point is a town-owned 20-acre parcel of land between the foot of the Newport Pell Bridge and the Jamestown toll plaza. The evident ecosystems are temperate forest, shrubland, freshwater wetland, salt marsh and coastal sand beach. In 2017 CRMC consented to Taylor Point Restoration Association (TPRA) to perform work in three identified areas. TPRA and the Taylor Point MG Project are working together to accomplish several goals: to remove 26 identified invasive species and plant native species to restore the natural habitat; to educate volunteers and island residents regarding the advantages of native plants and the harmful effects of invasives; to address path and beach erosion;
and hopefully to mitigate the effects of sea level rise on Taylor Point. Volunteers, including Rhode Island residents, URI Master Gardeners and TPRA board members, gather every other Saturday morning, year-round to clear specific areas of invasive plants, monitor cleared areas and transplant native shrubs from other areas of Taylor Point and Jamestown.

In less than a year we’ve cleared more than an acre of previously impassible field, unexpectedly exposing a shrub land of native arrow wood viburnum, high bush blueberry, Virginia rose and shadbush. Throughout each workday, the URI Master Gardeners on the team identify natives and invasives: characteristics to look for throughout the seasons, best practices on methods for removal with an emphasis on mechanical methods, best practices on timing of removal and transplantation, and natural succession specific to our focus areas. We discuss tool safety and proper care and provide handouts and discuss tick and poison ivy precautions. We provide tools, gloves, eye protection, water, snacks, insect repellant, resource material and friendly camaraderie.

During the year TPRA launched our online Plant Atlas, currently available to volunteers and visitors to the area via smartphone; and after infrastructure improvements funded by a town-initiated DEM grant, will have wifi and dedicated tablets to access the Plant Atlas.

Projects for the upcoming year include rebuilding eroded paths and flanking them with native grasses and native plants for pollinators; expansion to another focus area of invasive removal; project-initiated lectures regarding natives, invasives and land stewardship; tours of Taylor Point and other island land trust properties; and permanent signs/kiosk describing the project, identifying invasives and discussing benefits of native plants.

**Desourdy School Gardens**

At all Desourdy Schools, each grade incorporates a tailored aspect of curriculum into their gardens. Insects, Native American companion planting, water cycle, pollination and seeds are taught using the URI curriculum as a guide. Master Gardeners work with the principals and teachers to assist, provide resources and seek solutions through a team approach of visit, review, recommend and help. Children enjoy planting, watering, tending and harvesting. They take ownership of the garden and see it as part of their school environment. Their increasing knowledge and enthusiasm are the greatest success. Parents and parent organizations provide continuity in the garden during summer break.

**Barrington Christian Academy**

Barrington

We have a middle school garden club elective that takes care of garden needs throughout the different seasons. Our elementary classes have various responsibilities in the garden. For our 4th grade project, students experimented with different materials to develop a cold frame that would warm soil to an ideal planting temperature. Our 2nd graders worked with composting, and 1st graders made a prayer/ rock garden. For our middle school elective, students prepared soil, planted, watered and weeded. In the future we hope to add a fence and will implement the new Master Gardener curricula.
Our biggest successes included: growing sunflowers from seed indoors; changing the location of where we transplanted them helped reduce wind damage; planting herbs and flowers that attracted butterflies; and collecting caterpillars and watching them go through metamorphosis in the classroom. Our goal, same as last year’s, is to obtain a fence around the garden and to obtain curricula for our classes.

Thanks to UIMG Program, we used all the plants donated. We will read and learn which seeds to plant to allow students to see an early harvest before they leave for the summer, and to return in the fall to pick and harvest.

Bradley School
Portsmouth

With Principal Christina Bellanti, teacher Brenda Pacheco continued to rekindle interest among young students to observe the garden, watch/help plant veggies, and see flowers grow once the weeds were gone. With the fence repaired, Master Gardener Linda Hall took charge of clearing, repairing, amending soil and planting flowers and vegetables to allow a fresh start for all in the garden. Generous donations from our nearby garden centers and contractors were greatly appreciated.

Learning points for the students focused on: how weeds are a nuisance and must be removed to provide soil for vegetables and flowers; plants need water, sun, pollinators and no weeds in order to grow and produce fruits; invasives should be removed to promote the native plants that native birds, critters and bees need to survive and increase; and how a greenhouse can extend the growing season by learning to start plants from seeds.

2019 will be a great spring and summer at Bradley, Portsmouth!

Luther Elementary School
Swansea, MA

During this first year as a Desourdy School, Master Gardener Scott Sunaz-Lods created a garden, gained school and local support, and included the garden in the curriculum. Principal Sean Scalon donated a grow lamp for the classroom, which was used to get MG-provided seeds started in early spring. One hundred students were able to care for the seedlings while learning about the life cycle of a plant, each taking turns watering and turning on and off the lamp.

A special needs student worked hard on his Massachusetts standardized test to be able to work in the garden. He wanted to set up the soaker hoses by himself and set the timer. The one mainstream class he was in was science. The teacher allowed him to give a presentation to the whole class, by the garden, to explain how the hoses worked and how they benefited the plants, while also explaining how the plant uses the water. He then invited the other students to join him in planting the seedlings that we received from the Master Gardeners.

At the end of the Special Needs Summer Program, we held a BBQ where all the special needs students, parents and faculty were invited. The high school program students came to the elementary school to
harvest the MG-provided plant veggies and learned how to prepare pesto, salsa, grilled eggplant, and make a tomato mozzarella salad. This was highlighted by the superintendent in the opening slide show presented to the whole district during our professional development day.

**Melville School**  
**Portsmouth**

Melville appointed a new School Garden Mentor in 2018. Their gardens will instruct students to amend soil, plant, grow, care for and harvest plants and produce, based on a standard curriculum-based study. Excavation of the large garden plots began in fall 2017. Principal Elizabeth Viveiros has organized an impressive and energetic team of teachers, coaches and school system employees to create an exemplary School Garden Program.

Educational activities thus far included:
- Four garden-related classes of 2nd graders with Science Curriculum teacher, Erin Fischer. We started with an amazing Disney video on pollinators. The students then learned about native plants. Students used graph paper and designed gardens.
- Master Gardeners educated the students about pollinators and flowers, an always popular and favorite topic. We also used the seed packets received through Master Gardeners.

**Pell Elementary School**  
**Newport**

Application to become a vibrant SGM Program began in fall 2017. With School Garden Mentor Annie Guinan already identified, approval as a Desourdy Should occurred in 2018.

Our educational activities included:
- Creating newspaper pockets for eight 2nd grade classes in February 2018
- Mr. Sherman received funding for garden beds, soil and equipment
- Volunteers assembled garden beds and added soil
- Students planted seeds in gardens beds
- Students planted seedlings from URI greenhouses
- Summer Program allowed students to water vegetables and herbs in the garden beds
- Harvesting vegetables and herbs in the garden during the first week of September, and continuing to harvest from the garden until October
- Cooking classes with tomatoes, eggplant and pumpkins from the garden

We received plants from the greenhouse: tomatoes, eggplant, herbs, kale, lettuce, chard, and peppers. Most of these plants were still bearing in October. All these vegetables have been used for demonstration, tasting and cooking classes.

Our biggest success was Mr. Sherman applying for and receiving grants to purchase equipment; and more than 300 students and over 25 adults were involved.
Sowams School
Barrington

The students helped to ready the beds in the spring by turning over soil. Then, as a school, we took a week of various days to plant. As time went on, the children helped to weed and harvest when ready. This fall our beds were cleaned as a first step to winterizing them. Having the whole student body participate in the various stages of keeping the school garden helps the children to understand the life cycle of plants. The garden space was also used for many school curriculum-based educational activities.

There were many educational activities that took place in our garden last year:

- Students used the area for exploration and observation lessons connected to our science curriculum
- Teachers and students also used the space for art and sketching lessons
- Students were provided with the opportunity to participate in the community service learning project as we donate what we grow or sell and donate proceeds of what we grow
- Teachers also utilized the space for math lessons, as a quiet space for students who need social emotional support, and a peaceful place for outdoor reading as a class.

Our biggest success this year is that the entire school has now committed to participating in the garden project. By having all staff participating, it continues to provide numerous learning opportunities to ALL students at our school. We also were able to harvest enough produce to sell at our school-run farm stand.

We receive plants from the URIMG greenhouse; and this is the most important part for us. We are able to start from seed but have little luck hardening off our seedlings to mature enough plants for a good survival rate. Plants that provide the best and most successful harvest for us are tomatoes, peppers, eggplant and basil. Cucumbers would be a great addition.

Thompson Middle School
Newport

Last fall we started using the vegetable garden for planting with a small group of students in Mrs. Olaynak's ELA class. The garden was primarily used as part of the curriculum based on writing and language skills. Mrs. Olaynack's students also began writing grants for the garden and have been very successful.

This spring, the school's SMILE Program "adopted" the garden as their stewardship project. SMILE applied for and received a $1,500 grant to improve the garden through the Compass School in South Kingstown from Newman's Own Foundation.

The cold crops that were planted in the spring gave the students an opportunity to harvest food for donation to the MLK Community Food Bank.

Educational activities included: writing, composting, vermicomposting, building, planting, teamwork, planning, vegetable gardening, flower gardening, philanthropy, pollination, and insects and their life cycles.
Our biggest success was The Compass School/ Newman’s Grant and renovation it provided. Having SMILE join Mrs. Olaynak’s small band of ELA students increased the number of teachers and students using the garden. There were terrific harvests of cold crops which didn’t mind the lack of sunlight the garden gets.

Our biggest challenge was that the siting for the garden couldn’t be changed. The location between the school and St. Joseph’s Church restricts the amount of light the garden gets. This limits the crops that can be grown.

**Tiverton Middle School**

Tiverton

Last year we were able to construct several garden beds and make a raised English garden bed. We planted vegetables and flowers. We also filled in a koi pond and mulch around the beds.

In 2018 we looked at what we were going to plant and we started them inside. With a hydroponic kit, we studied and were able to compare which ones grew better in dirt or in water. Our biggest success was actually getting the courtyard back again and to make it look like a garden space. For 2019 we want to plan out the garden and create a layout before planting.

**Westport Elementary School**

Westport, MA

Seed planting activities took place in little greenhouses with the after-school program. The after-school program took the lead with the garden project. Plants were brought in from the URI greenhouses and the school received seeds which were put to use in the garden.