Public Education Statistics:

Demonstration Gardens
- # of gardens: 15
- # of direct adult contacts: 2,183
- # of direct youth contacts: 1,332

School Gardens
- # of gardens: 16
- # of direct adult contacts: 55
- # of direct youth contacts: 1,892

Public Presentations
- # of sessions given: 23
- # of direct adult contacts: 494

Kiosk
- # of kiosks offered: 20
- # of direct adult contacts: 392

Soil Testing
- # of events hosted: 23
- # of tests conducted: 768
- # of direct adult contacts: 431

Total Direct Contacts:
3,163 adults
3,224 children

Food Donations:

East Farm Demonstration Garden & East Farm Apple Orchard and Giving Garden
- Pounds of food donated: 2,503
- Donation recipients:
  - Johnnycake Center Food Bank of Peace Dale
  - URI Graduate Village
2018 Highlight:

East Farm Demonstration Garden named 2018 Project of the Year

This project exemplifies our mission of public outreach and education in the areas of land stewardship and food growing. Through the dedicated involvement of 35 URI Master Gardener volunteers, the garden was able to reach some 700 clients, 100 of whom were children. The garden team continues to actively seek to involve diverse and underserved populations by working with partner agencies such as the Johnny Cake Center of Peacedale, Thundermist Health Center and the Narragansett Indian Tribe.

Partnering with the Veterans Administration, monthly sessions were held to promote psychological well-being.

The garden experiments with different growing techniques and demonstrates sustainable gardening. Adding new plants to the pollinator garden drew visual interest and became a focal point for visitors, providing a great teaching opportunity. Areas of public education included composting and pest management, as well as water conservation through drip irrigation. All garden produce is handled according to GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) guidelines, ensuring that the 1700 pounds of food donated to local food pantries was safe and pathogen free. Because of high visibility and proximity to the busy Saturday farmer’s market, planned educational programs were complemented by numerous informal and impromptu teaching opportunities.

Identified successes included a substantial increase in amount of food donated over last year. Also, volunteers developed greater knowledge about native pollinator plants through collaboration with Dr. Alm, Professor of Plant Sciences and Entomology from URI.

Project Highlights:

Charlestown Schoolhouse Garden
Charlestown

This project welcomed Suzanne McDonald, a new project leader. With the garden’s proximity to the Cross Mills Library and the Charlestown Historical Society, this is a high visibility project with plenty of foot traffic. The focus is on native pollinators, perennials and colorful annuals that thrive in a sustainable garden without pesticides and watered only by rain. Successes included an Earth Day make and take starter greenhouse workshop geared toward young children. Volunteers shared a day-long open house with the Library and Historical Society as partners. They introduced the Native Plant system and educated the visiting public about monarch butterflies. They also hosted a workshop for planting a tea garden at the Charlestown Senior Center.
URI Graduate Village Community Garden
Kingston

This is a relatively new project that supports the efforts of graduate students who grow food for their student community and families. This has been identified as a food insecure population that benefits both from the food grown on site and also from donations from other Master Gardener projects. Identified successes included overall improvement in the garden through education about proper watering and maintenance, insect and disease identification, and treatment and proper use of fertilizers.

East Farm Apple Orchard
South Kingstown

This project saw a beautiful springtime blossom season. Volunteers enjoyed hosting a community picking event in mid-August that drew about seventy residents of the URI Graduate Village as well as fellow Master Gardeners and interested public. This was described as a joyful event outdoors in the orchard which was enjoyed by people of all ages. Many of the food insecure Graduate Village residents again benefitted by food donation and community involvement.

Chestnut Orchard Research Project

This research project highlights the year’s focus on land stewardship through ongoing work to develop blight resistant native Chestnut trees that can be eventually re-introduced and planted throughout state woodlands. In collaboration with the American Chestnut Foundation and South Kingstown Land Trust, blight inoculation of the seed orchard was done. This inoculation will be a recurring process to identify blight resistant trees. Public tours are given where visitors learn about the once prolific chestnut. Presentations throughout the year include demonstration of pruning techniques.

URI Botanical Gardens
Kingston

This is the first year for this ambitious project which is rehabilitating the surrounds of the Master Gardener Program home at URI. In partnership with URI Faculty, as well as the Building and Grounds crew, a dedicated team worked to restore the rose garden, remove invasive plants, prune and weed the extensive gardens.

Successes include making a significant and visible leap toward restoration of the botanical gardens as a showcase and teaching ground for homeowners to learn about xeriscaping in lawns and gardens.
Kettle Pond Native Plant Garden
Charlestown

Last year’s Southern Region Project of the Year honorable mention continues to educate and inspire many hundreds of visitors, especially children and school groups. In partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Tomaquag Museum, RI Natural History Survey and the RI Wild Plant Society, as well as Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership, this relatively small group of 14 has accomplished a great deal. Volunteers teach visitors about native vs non-native and invasive plants and about historic medicinal use of plants by indigenous people. Biodiversity and pollinator conservation are stressed. Hands-on learning and creative exercises such as scavenger hunts keep children interested. Numerous formal presentations are given with emphasis geared toward specific audiences. Extensive plot maps were developed, and numerous signs installed throughout the garden areas so visitors can identify plants.

Successes include bringing a vast number of seedlings and plants to fill a garden over the course of one year. Garden areas were created including an arbor to highlight vertical growth and benches were placed to provide rest and reflection in a shaded area. A complete re-design of the Visitor’s Center Island using native plants now provides a stunning visual as one approaches the site.

URI President’s Garden
Kingston

This beautiful garden that delights the eye in every season is the hard work of just a handful of dedicated and talented Master Gardeners. Located on the walkway from campus through the URI President’s residence, this garden is always on display and is a natural site for photographs. As part of the project open house tour in June, visitors were given information on the origin and design of the garden. At the same time information was given on soil, mulch, weeds, deer prevention and pollinators.

Wilcox Park
Westerly

This project inspires visitors through ongoing Master Gardener-led tours focusing on native gardens, including a rain garden, demonstration garden, pollinator garden and the URI native plant system garden. Because visitors are always in the park, opportunities for formal and informal teaching abound. Information shared includes cultural practices, basic botany, sustainable garden practices and plant ID. Park tours also highlight native plants and spectacular champion trees while sharing the value of trees and tree culture.

15 kiosks were scheduled on site and moved indoors to the Westerly Library in the event of rain. Workshops taught about winter and gypsy moth caterpillars and beetles, as well as about Wilcox Park
and its historical significance. This large-scale project thrives at the hands of a small but ambitious volunteer cohort in collaboration with a small park staff.

**East Farm Giving Garden**

*South Kingstown*

This large-scale project highlights coordinated volunteerism through the efforts of 14 Master Gardeners and 19 non-Master Gardeners. Partnering with the Town of Narragansett, South County Museum and the Narrow River Preservation Association, this dedicated group has accomplished a great deal in restoring a huge tract of land. A cohort of 40 volunteers from the URI Women’s Rowing Team pitched in, as did a group of seven from Alpha Psi Omega Fraternity.

This habitat restoration project includes wooded trails, fields and wetlands, and borders the Narrow River. Educational signage was installed featuring artwork by local artist Frances Topping. The handsome signs describe the flora and fauna that can be seen in the area.

The focus is on teaching volunteers and visitors how to identify and eradicate invasive and non-native plants. Native trees and plants replace those removed, thereby enhancing biodiversity. A major success has been the growth of native ferns in areas along the trail where invasive privet was removed as well as the growth of rose mallow and cattails along the ponds which were once nearly invisible behind stands of Phragmites and Japanese Knotweed.

Ambitious plans for the future include a linear park along Lake Canonchet and Little Neck Pond. Plans have already been drawn for this multi-year project which will require coordination between the Town of Narragansett and various state agencies.
**The Pollination Meadow**

This project teaches students and the public about how to attract pollinators. Tours and lectures in the meadow and Edison Memorial Garden, both located at East Farm, feature information on what types of plants can be grown, soil preparation and irrigation. URI Professor Stephen Alm from Plant Sciences and Entomology provides valuable expert collaboration.

This year saw the planting of more acres of buckwheat and other pollinator attracting crops as well as preparing additional 100-foot raised beds for crops. The work required erection of deer fencing.

**Desourdy School Gardens**

**Tower Street School Community Center**
Westerly

An estimated 200 youth and 40 adults visited and learned from this school garden. With year-round activities, students learn about soil analysis and composting, pollinators and pests, parts of a plant, proper watering and farm hygiene. Seasonal activities include hoop house and greenhouse growing, spring and fall cleanup, and seasonal planting, tending, harvesting and cooking produce. Master Gardener mentors report their most productive season to date. Successful endeavors included painting the greenhouse and adding birdhouses which contribute to a tidy, pleasing look. The pollinator and monarch gardens were expanded and during the summer students raised white New Zealand rabbits.

**Richmond Elementary School**
Richmond

This K-4 school highlights a field of study specializing in health and wellness and enjoyed the involvement of 250 youths and 100 adults in 2018. Using materials provided by URI, the garden is used to support the GEMS-NET Science Curriculum and is used as an outdoor teaching classroom. The School Garden Mentor reports a greater awareness of the garden as an integral part of the school curriculum.

Master Gardener mentors partner with teachers and parents who are involved in year-round activities that begin in late fall with planting of spring flowering bulbs. They prepare and plant raised beds including a pizza and a pollinator garden; and students learn about the square foot gardening method. Educational activities involving the School Garden Mentors include a Richmond goes green initiative. 25 families remain active in maintaining the garden during the summer.
Chariho Middle School
Richmond

This school garden had participation by 57 youth and 7 adults. Students planted seeds and grew seedlings in the greenhouse, which were supplemented by plant donations from URI Master Gardener greenhouses. They learned to plant, care for and harvest their garden. Over 500 pounds of produce was donated to RI CAN food bank and the Chariho Career and Technical Culinary Program.

Dunn’s Corner Elementary School
Westerly

This school enjoyed the involvement of an estimated 200 youth and 40 adults. First graders planted lettuce to donate to a local food bank; while individual classes took responsibility to plant, weed and harvest different beds. Students learned about using a rainfall gauge. The School Garden Mentor shared a plant being eaten by black swallowtail caterpillars so students could learn more about the caterpillar life cycle and defense mechanisms. A system of summer maintenance was developed involving rotating families.

Hope Valley Elementary School
Hope Valley

Some 40 youth and 11 adults learned hands on that growing is hard work! One second grade and one fourth grade class were involved in planting and caring for the garden while families cared for it during the summer. With new School Garden Mentors, this existing project will be maintained and enhanced.

The Prout School
Wakefield

Prout also has a brand-new mentor who worked with about 10 school individuals to learn about proper watering, weed and insect identification, plant disease and composting. There are plans for future mentor involvement in educational offerings.

West Vine Street School
Pawcatuck, CT

Now under construction, there will be a brand-new garden in spring 2019 featuring a sensory garden and an individual raised bed garden for each class. Despite the absence this year of a physical garden, mentors were busy supporting learning in the classroom. In partnership with the Pequotsepos Nature Center, some 400 students and 40 adults learned about pollinators, bulbs and flower parts, natural habitats and worms.

Westerly High School
Westerly

School Garden Mentors worked with youth and adults in the culinary arts and SMILE programs. Students assisted in the installation of drip irrigation and in planting seeds and seedlings. Mentors help
teach soil testing, proper fertilization and adequate sun to ensure growing success. A successful harvest with a pleasing amount of produce was reported.

Ocean Tides School
Narragansett

This location grew plants from seed in their own greenhouse. They had a successful harvest of pumpkins and potatoes as well as abundant and beautiful basil. Students grew succulent gardens to give as gifts. This location benefits adjudicated youth who must learn to cooperate and get along with others. Participants enjoy hands-on learning about the science of growing.

Mystic Middle School
Mystic, CT

The leaders at Mystic Middle school engaged students in a great many lessons, including planting days, herb identification and usage, and vegetable planting. Students learned about soil testing, pest ID and management, organic gardening and composting. 30 youth and 12 adults participated; and experiences included planting native plants, learning about pollinators and installing birdhouses. Students tasted food that was grown and learned ways to use these foods at home.

Narragansett Elementary School
Narragansett

This brand-new garden emerged as quite a success story. Through the combined effort of school garden volunteers, parents and community members, an unused field was transformed into a fully-fenced, raised bed garden that accommodates the entire elementary school. There is space for each classroom from K - 4. Plans to build raised beds for handicapped access are in the works. An estimated 500 children and 100 adults have been involved.

Children learned through participation in the construction process as well as in planting, including spring radishes to harvest before school’s end. Three sisters gardens were started to be harvested on return in the fall. A dedication ceremony was held where Narragansett Indians taught students gardening words in their language and blessed the garden. Students planted pumpkin seeds which were later harvested.

A garden club has been established; and a pumpkin carving and illumination festival was held this fall with wide community participation. There were food trucks and a firetruck demo.

Compass School
Kingston

This school promotes a farm/garden/nature orientation to its students. Outdoor classroom space is used heavily in the curriculum. The property has native flowers, as well as multiple food crop gardens in addition to chickens and goats. Approximately 200 children and 30 adults have been involved in school garden initiatives, including a lavender workshop, a fairy house workshop and a native plant identification program.

Monsignor Clarke School
Wakefield

This initiative involves about 30 youth, who learned all phases of gardening, including mulching, use of compost, planting, weeding, watering and harvesting. Food was donated to a local church and food pantry. Plans to start plants from seed are in the works to compliment those donated from the Master Gardener greenhouse.