URI MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM
NORTHERN REGION
2018 REPORT

THE UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

URI MASTER GARDENERS
Cultivating the future
**2018 NORTHERN REGION REPORT**  
Compiled by Debbie Rodin, Northern Region URIMGP Council Coordinator

### PUBLIC EDUCATION STATISTICS:

#### Demonstration Gardens
- # of gardens: 7
- # of direct adult contacts: 2,956
- # of direct youth contacts: 289

#### School Gardens
- # of gardens: 11
- # of direct adult contacts: 181
- # of direct youth contacts: 2,046

#### Public Presentations
- # of sessions given: 26
- # of direct adult contacts: 454

#### Kiosk
- # of kiosks offered: 16
- # of direct adult contacts: 1,331

#### Soil Testing
- # of events hosted: 17
- # of tests conducted: 378
- # of direct adult contacts: 203

#### TOTAL DIRECT CONTACTS:
- 5,125 adults
- 2,335 children

### FOOD DONATIONS:

**Good Shepherd Community Garden, Seekonk Meadows, Slater Mill, Mount St. Charles Academy, Plant Row Program**

- Pounds of food donated: 1,047
- Donation recipients: Local soup kitchens and food pantries
2018 Highlight:
Mount St. Charles Academy
Woonsocket

The geodesic-domed greenhouse and the newly-built raised beds are impressive and innovative. Solar power is used to heat the structure and planting beds, as well as water. Forty-five students within the Environmental Club are actively involved 2-3 days per week. The theme is recycle, reuse, and reduce. Mary McNulty, Eileen Czyrklis, and Janice Ferry guided students in activities from planting seeds through harvest, including amending of soil, learning how to make growing structures from bamboo, building cold frames and maintaining worms in a worm hotel. Their gardening efforts led to 602 pounds of produce that were donated to the All Saints Soup Kitchen. Volunteers from the soup kitchen were able to share with students just how valuable these donations were to their efforts.

Project Highlights:

Cumberland Library and Senior Center Perennial Gardens
Cumberland

Located at the Cumberland Monastery and hosted by the Town of Cumberland, these perennial gardens include the established gazebo garden and a new garden in front of the nearby senior center. Led by Mary Malouin, Master Gardeners tended the gardens twice a month from April through October. Soil testing was available each month and very well attended. These gardens are frequently visited by the public throughout the season and a frequent spot for photographs. Good conversations are had when the garden is staffed, primarily around pollinators and perennials. This year more native pollinator plants were added to the gazebo garden, in addition to herbs. A 10-plant native plant system and more perennial plantings were the base for the first phase of the Sr. Center garden, after removal of old plants and shrubs that were not pollinator-friendly. A bee hotel was installed to support breeding of native bees. Fall clean-up was deferred in favor of allowing a place for pollinators to overwinter. Five public classes were offered at the Cumberland Library, including Attracting Pollinators, Herbs, Raised Beds, How to Grow and Care for Roses, and Attracting Birds to Your Garden. Each session attracted 20-35 people. The gazebo garden participated in the Project Open House in June; and a gazebo kiosk was set up during local garden club plant sales that were held nearby.
Dagget Farm at Slater Park, Pawtucket

This project, in partnership with the Arc of Blackstone Valley’s Horticultural Therapy Program for persons with physical and emotional disabilities, includes greenhouse activities weekly in the spring with seed planting and seedling transplanting. Activity then moves into the outside demonstration garden for the remainder of the season with MGs working 2 days a week, led by John Gaynor and Sarah Horst. Within the demonstration garden, which is adjacent to the animal and playground area, Arc clients have handicapped access through high raised beds and pathways; and the public often wanders through the many raised beds and garden beds filled with perennials and herbs. This May, Master Gardeners organized an Open House that attracted over 150 people. This included 10 educational booths, 6 of which were MG booths (kiosk, soil testing, a very popular children’s activity, bees and pollination, small container gardening, and edible landscape). These were joined by 4 community booths (Worm Ladies, C’est La Bee, City of Pawtucket on Water Quality and the Arc of Blackstone Valley). During the open house, the City of Pawtucket handed out 85 free rain barrels to residents; and 4 decorated rain barrels were raffled off to attendees. This fall, Master Gardeners started reviving the adjoining gazebo garden which was overgrown. This holds great potential for the future with native shrubs and perennial plants being added through a multi-year plan. In 2019 the garden will be shared with 200+ summer youth day campers within Slater Park.

Glocester Heritage Gardens Chepachet

The well-established Reuben Mason Medicinal Garden adjoins the Glocester Heritage Society’s historic home that dates back to the 18th century. The property is on busy Rt. 44 and has good visibility and access. Led by Pat DiLorenzo, the garden is staffed on Saturday mornings and for special events. Oversized mobile street signage is put up to alert the public that MGs are on duty and available for tours and questions. At this picket-fenced garden, monthly talks and demonstrations are held. A monthly feature board shares details on different flowers, weeds and pests. There is also an informational kiosk that features seeds and many handouts. The medicinal garden is period-specific and all plants are identified. Talks, including demonstrations, were held in the spring and fall with this year’s focus on plant division. Other talks include samples of 10 medicinal garden plants and their history and usage is shared. The Reuben Mason garden also was part of the June Project Open House that attracted over 40 visitors.
The Job Armstrong Garden is a work in progress, and is located in downtown Chepachet, behind the Glocester Heritage Society’s offices. The plan is to create a historic shopkeeper’s garden; but this year’s efforts centered around clearing overgrown shrubs and plants and finishing the stone walkway. A fall workday was advertised and held, with 14 MGs generating more than 30 bags of refuse. This site is now primed for spring planting.

**Good Shepherd Community Garden**

**Pawtucket**

This urban community garden is home to Church of the Good Shepherd members and surrounding neighbors who don’t have the space to garden at their homes and apartments. Expertise is provided by Master Gardeners, led by Jeff Faria and Caryl Frink, and includes scheduled in-garden workshops and informal coaching sessions. Seasonal workshops this year included:

- Seed starting, soil testing and composing
- Gardening in small spaces
- Garden maintenance, second crop ideas and harvesting
- Closing the garden and winter preparations

MGs were on-site weekly and themes of reducing pesticide use, water conservation and composting were stressed. Eighty pounds of fresh produce was donated. This garden partners with the Church of the Good Shepherd who provides land for the community garden, as well as a conduit for communication to church members. This garden is intended to serve as a model for the Pawtucket area and beyond.

**John Hunt House Heritage Gardens**

**at Hunt Mills, East Providence**

Three gardens are tended that sit within the 14-acre property that houses the John Hunt House Museum, dating back to the 1700’s and reflecting the Victorian age. These gardens, including a kitchen garden, were visited by over 2,000 people this summer through a variety of in-garden workshops, guided tours and open houses. The gardens were staffed two days a month and soil testing was available. Events were promoted via emails to crew and northern region MGs, the historical society website and newsletter, and URI website and MG Newsletter. Seeds were distributed at Mother’s Day and at the Historical Society’s Annual Picnic. Four demos/talks were shared:

- Composting and Soil Testing by Jeff Faria
- Historic Garden Tour by Cheryl Faria
- Medicinal and Culinary Plants by Valerie Begin
- Harvesting and Preparing for the Winter by MG crew
Seekonk Meadows
Seekonk, MA

Four URI MG gardens (Library Foundation Garden, Sharon’s Memorial Garden, Perennial Garden, and the Gazebo Garden) span the adjoining Seekonk Library and Seekonk Meadows park area. Seekonk Meadows is a capped, reclaimed landfill that is now a 9-acre park and community space with meadows, nature trails and a gazebo area that houses a xeriscape garden. Both the library and Seekonk Meadows are high-traffic areas and attract continuous visitors. The Master Gardener team meets weekly to tend the gardens and also holds in-garden workshops; leads guided tours; offers soil testing and has presence at events held at both venues, including our own Project Open House in June. Over 300 adults and children formally visited these gardens and events in 2018; and over 300 pounds of produce were shared with the public.

Slater Mill Historic Garden
Pawtucket

The gardens at Slater Mill demonstrate how people lived off the land during the 17th and 18th centuries. Herbs, vegetables, medicinal plants and plants for dyes are grown at this historic site, as well as fruit trees and a pollinator garden. The host, Slater Mill Association, conducts docent-led tours of the buildings for thousands of visitors who visit the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. Sherry Dzamba, Anne Faulkner and their crew tend the garden twice weekly, often leading informal tours with mill museum visitors. Master Gardeners explain why certain plants are grown and questions are answered, many centering around the more unusual crops grown including cotton, tobacco and flax. They also share information supporting good land husbandry and plants with early commercial and industrial usage. MGs hosted kiosks at 3 special on-site events this year. Over 200 people directly interacted with the crew throughout the season; and 65 pounds of produce were raised for donation.

Desourdy School Garden Highlights

Captain Isaac Paine Elementary
Foster

The school garden at Isaac Paine Elementary is noteworthy in its use as a teaching platform across grades and disciplines. The garden serves as an authentic learning environment for over 200 students for geology, math, life sciences, physical science, art and horticulture. The courtyard garden has many raised beds that efficiently leverage Square Foot Gardening techniques. Our School Garden Mentors, Rebecca Payette, a URI MG who is also a teacher at Paine Elementary, along with MG Ed Haynes and Dawn Bergstrom, led this effort which saw a major expansion this year. Students researched, planned and installed the first phase of a new wildlife habitat in the schoolyard. This habitat had strong
More pollinator plants were added including the URI MGP native plant system, along with additional native plants, trees and shrubs. The new habitat comes alive with fences that were colorfully painted, butterflies grown and released, and a “nesting tree” constructed with many hand-built birdhouses.

Willett Elementary
Attleboro, MA

Four hundred fifty students are exposed to the garden (K through 4th grade) through multiple curricula. Creatively led by Master Gardeners Margie Kelley and Kim Gattoni, this year’s highlights include:
- A continued commitment to non-GMOs and a pesticide-free garden
- The addition of cold frames, a pollinator garden and compost station
- Raising over 300 lbs. of produce, distributed to students, families and volunteers
- Seed collection and drying for next year’s use.

The crew also branched out to participate in the Attleboro Farmers Market to talk about the value of teaching gardens and shared activities, such as making paper pots and butterflies and creating seed bombs.