



WISCONSIN MASTER GARDENERS IN PIERCE COUNTY



*In 2018, Pierce County Master Gardener Volunteers reported 3,200 hours of community service, worth a value of over \$76,800.**

*Using the current estimated dollar value of volunteer time in Wisconsin of \$24.69 per hour from Independent Sector (independentsector.org).

FEATURED PROJECTS

Demonstration and learning garden

Master Gardener Volunteers demonstrated various methods for home vegetable production at the Demonstration and Learning Garden in River Falls. In addition, they hosted 7 gardening classes, serving over 120 people. Feedback indicated visitors learned new ways to do things at home to be more successful with their home gardens. Additionally, over 900 pounds of fresh produce was donated to hunger prevention efforts.

As part of the Demonstration and Learning Garden, MGVs focused on youth gardening with the planting of a Storybook Garden. To coincide with the release of the Peter Rabbit movie this year, they created a "Peter Rabbit Garden". The garden had signs and excerpts from the book, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. Children walked through the garden, read the "book", and saw first hand the vegetables being mentioned. To make the experience more authentic, various props were placed throughout the garden, including Peter Rabbit's jacket, shoes, and a life-size scarecrow depicting Mr. McGregor. Children and their parents enjoyed the garden and learned about various plants. They were able to taste test various lettuce varieties, see what different crops looked like, and practice reading along the way. Several children indicated they wanted to plant a similar garden at their house, and parents were surprised how interested, excited and motivated the kids were and planned to do more gardening at home.

Perilous plants

MGVs helped teach Pierce County fourth graders about perilous plants—plants that can harm you. Over the course of 2 days, MGVs repeated a 20-minute session about dangerous plants 22 times to all fourth graders in the county as part of



Rural Safety Day. Students, teachers, and parent chaperones learned about various ways certain plants can be harmful, either by touching (e.g., wild parsnip, thorny plants) or eating (e.g., berries, mushrooms). Survey results from kids and teachers indicate the session was extremely valuable and educational, and that kids will be more aware of dangerous plants when out in nature.

Pierce County Fair

MGVs hosted an information booth/tent at the Pierce County Fair. The fair booth is an opportunity to reach a large number of people, and provide information about relevant local horticulture-related issues. Topics of great interest at the booth this year included Japanese beetle control, emerald ash borer which was recently found nearby, and ways to lower garden and landscape maintenance. Also at the booth were things to attract kids, such as painted wood face cutouts of Peter Rabbit and a scarecrow, where kids could have pictures taken.



The Master Gardener Program in Pierce County started in 1999. It operates in conjunction with the St. Croix Valley Master Gardener Program. Over 142 people have been trained since that time, and there are currently 26 certified Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) for 2019.

Where you can find activities by MGVs in Pierce County

- River Falls Farmers' Market
- Pierce County Fair
- Extension Demonstration Garden
- "Grow to Share" Community Garden
- River Falls area rain gardens
- Prescott Freedom Park
- River Falls White Pathway and Parks
- Ellsworth community projects



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



University of Wisconsin, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Wisconsin counties cooperating.

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