



MSU EXTENSION CONNECTS PUBLIC WITH ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE GARDENING THROUGH EDUCATION AND SERVICE

\$3,318,409

value of 95,384 volunteer hours contributed by MSU Extension Master Gardener (EMG) volunteers

772

participants took the Foundations of Gardening course in 2025

480

attendees at the Smart Gardening Conferences in 2024 and 2026

1,835

hours spent by 42 EMG diagnostic responders answering Ask Extension and hotline questions

PRIORITY

A R E A S

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension uses creative approaches to reach Michigan's 7 million adults, ensuring our gardening resources are available to everyone through various channels. These include online courses such as Foundations of Gardening, Smart Gardening with Vegetables 101, Backyard Fruit 101, and Starting a School or Community Garden. These programs help new and experienced gardeners learn more about gardening and responsible pest control methods. MSU Extension also runs local in-person programs on topics like pruning, starting seeds, growing indoor plants, creating pollinator habitats and starting a garden. These sessions are often offered in partnership with community groups.

IMPACTS



1,700+

participants have taken the Foundations of Gardening course since its creation in 2023



14,000+

followers reached through educational posts on Gardening in Michigan Facebook page



176

registrants participated in the School and Community Garden online course



1,412

calls were answered on the Lawn and Garden hotline



48

individuals trained through the Diagnostic Academy to support Ask Extension, hotline and local projects



1,980+

EMG volunteers are active and volunteering in their communities across the state

THE FOUNDATIONS OF GARDENING COURSE

MSU Extension's Foundations of Gardening course is the consumer horticulture team's premier gardening course designed for both the public and future MSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers. It is an in-depth Desire2Learn, or D2L, course that runs twice a year over 11 weeks with numerous self-paced learning materials and live webinars created and delivered by MSU Extension consumer horticulture educators. The course covers 10 topics ranging from lawn care to plant propagation. Upon successful completion, attendees receive a certificate and may apply for admission to the Extension Master Gardener Program.



FOSTERING STRONG COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

MSU Extension partners with the community to ensure our classes are relevant to the people we serve. An example of this is our partnership with Edible Flint, which provides affordable garden kits and food donations to help people in Flint, Michigan, and throughout Genesee County. Together, we offer urban gardening classes and maintain a pollinator garden at Edible Flint's urban education farm.

In Manistee, Mason, Lake and Newaygo counties, MSU Extension partners with FiveCap every spring to provide gardening training to low- and moderate-income families who receive free vegetable plants funded by the Community Services Block Grant.

MSU Extension has been working with community partners Young People of Purpose Explorers and Black Food Sovereignty in Jackson, Michigan,

“ All the speakers did a fantastic job! I thoroughly enjoyed the course and investigating the additional resources provided. I appreciate you curating a list of resources. It is sometimes difficult to find trustworthy sources for information. ”

Foundations of Gardening participant

“ This course was so enlightening, enjoyable and interesting to me. It was so much information, and I was exposed to material that I wasn't aware of. I have a new outlook on gardening. ”

Foundations of Gardening participant



Healthy Gardens for Healthy Communities class in Jackson County.

to develop the Healthy Gardens for Healthy Communities course. This course is designed to strengthen communities by teaching residents how to grow their own healthy food, particularly in areas with limited access to fresh produce. It seeks to cultivate urban gardeners who understand and apply integrated pest management principles and other best practices that support food production and healthy living. Because of these collaborations, over 15,000 attendees have participated in classes hosted and taught by the MSU Extension consumer horticulture team.

Visit Ask Extension at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert/> or call the Lawn and Garden Hotline at 1-888-678-3464