Grand Challenge: Developing Tomorrow’s Leaders

Title: Extension Master Gardener Training

Why is this issue important?
Continuing to recruit new Master Gardeners is a vital part of ensuring the program’s continued success. This year we are focused on training new Master Gardeners on technology, how to obtain quality research-based information and becoming leaders within this organization and their communities.

How did Extension address this issue?
Extension has developed a robust process to exchange information with potential Master Gardeners to ensure the volunteers will be a good fit for the program. After applications are received, prospective members attend a seminar providing an overview of training requirements and volunteer expectations for the program and what involvement in the Master Gardener program entails in Shawnee County. This provides us an opportunity to explain what will be expected if the applicants choose to join, and in turn, gives them opportunities to ask us questions about the program. This pre-acceptance orientation is followed by brief interviews that give our staff and volunteer assistants a feeling for each potential member’s personality, goals and experiences. In this process we look for potential members with the time to dedicate to the group, as well as those who understand and are eager to carry out K-State Research and Extension’s mission to provide quality, research-based information to the residents of Shawnee County.

What was the impact?
Eighteen new Master Gardeners joined the program in 2017 and are currently completing their training courses. This group has shown enthusiasm and eagerness to learn. In 2018 they will begin their volunteer service, and all of the Extension staff and Extension Master Gardeners are excited to work with them!