

Dear Master Gardeners:

The work of Master Gardener volunteers is making an important difference for Maine people. In the past year the Plant A Row for the hungry program produced over 80,000 pounds of fresh food for needy people and families across our state. This is just one example of how Master Gardeners make a difference that matters. I am asking that all Master Gardeners report their volunteer activities and accomplishments to their local Extension Office. Every project – regardless of size matters! Your reporting is used by me and others to advocate for Cooperative Extension at the local, state and national level. I have used the work of Master Gardens to help legislators, understand that the University of Maine has a presence in communities in their district and your work makes a positive difference that they were unaware of. University administrators have been very impressed with the size, scope and impact achieved through the Master Gardener program. Please take the time to share what you are doing with your local office. It really matters – more than ever!

Thank you for all that Master Gardeners do across Maine. Your dedication to gardening and public service is an inspiration and makes the Master Gardener program a point of pride for the University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

With appreciation,

John Rebar
Executive Director
University of Maine Cooperative Extension

December 2008

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Master Gardener volunteer trainings are up and going for 2009. Most of the counties will be focusing on Perennials and Woody Ornamentals.

Check Page 6 for a list of trainings in the state.

NORTH Versus SOUTH

Article provided by

Pat Porter (Knox-Lincoln Maine MG 06',
Florida MG 06')

No, I don't mean the Civil War, but how does the Master Gardener Volunteer Program vary from Maine to Florida? Since I've been privileged to take the program in both places, I thought you might like to know how they're *alike* and how they *differ*.

1. MG Programs in both Maine and Florida try to impress upon you a respect and understanding of nature.
2. Both put a lot of thought and effort into teaching you the biology of plant life and how to achieve good plant health.
3. Maine is much more oriented toward food crops, tapping into Extension's fruit and vegetable specialists for training. For Maine's ornamentals program (which rotates every other year), stress is on sustainable landscaping practices to protect air and water quality and to keep Maine's native plant and animal heritage intact. Florida is much more focused on ornamentals - landscape and flower gardens (a little on citrus, but not much on vegetable gardening).
4. Maine stresses the importance of soil health and the use of organic matter. In fact, the fall Knox-Lincoln and Waldo program makes a hands-on compost pile. Florida makes no effort in this area.
5. In Florida there's a lot of emphasis on working with programs to establish flower gardens at schools and public areas. Although we do some of that here in Maine by partnering with garden clubs, much more effort goes into working with home vegetable gardeners, school and community gardens and preserving heirloom crops.
6. Maine promotes the Plant-A-Row for the Hungry (PAR) program, which does not exist in the area of Florida where I live.
7. Both programs welcome volunteers at their Extension offices to assist with home gardening calls. Florida MGs conduct a plant clinic at local libraries one morning a week. People bring in plant and bug samples, and whatever else they have a problem with and MG Volunteers attempt to identify and recommend solutions. This gives the program direct contact with people on a local level.
8. All literature handed out in Florida must come from the University of Florida web site and University published literature. Maine is more flexible, using information from UMaine Extension, other Extension programs in the northeast, the Maine Organic Farmer's and Gardener's Association (MOFGA) and books in the office library.
9. No pesticide information can be given out by MGs in either state, unless it's given to the client via a publication from the sources outlined above. Maine MGs participate in the state-wide YardScaping Program, which promotes healthy yards and gardens while reducing home pesticide and fertilizer use.
10. At the end of Florida's MG Program, they have a scavenger hunt giving you a list of plant characteristics and you must find a sample plant that fits that description. In Maine there's a final exam, which encourages everyone to explore their notebook and UMaine Extension resources.
11. In Florida, **75** volunteer hours are required after course completion to become certified. To maintain yearly certification, you must continue with 30 hours *plus* additional education credit requirements. In Maine, MGs volunteer **40** hours for certification and 20 hours thereafter.

NORTH vs. SOUTH continued.....

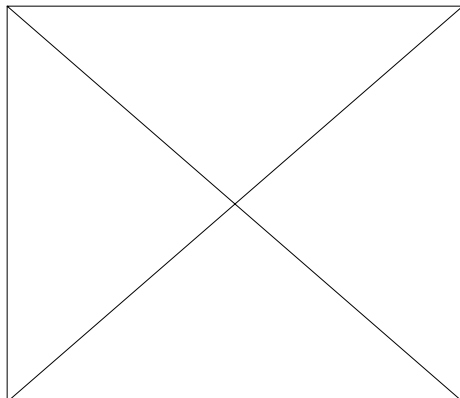
Maine MGs are given opportunities for advanced training but credits are not tallied (only volunteer hours).

12. Both have Junior Master Gardener programs. Maine created the Maine Apprentice Gardener Program (MAG), which is used primarily in schools. There is also the Kids Can Grow Program which is taught in summer. Florida's program is more often taught at the Extension offices.
13. Maine's MG program costs \$90.00 for over 40 hours of training and there's no deposit. The fee for Florida's is 4 times more, but you get ¾ of the fee back when you complete your 75 volunteer hours.

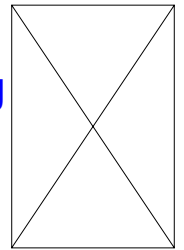
To me the biggest difference is #3 - Maine stresses fruit and vegetable production while Florida works more with landscapes and ornamentals. They both seem to have adapted to the primary needs of the local areas.

Editor's note: *Pat Porter (pictured below) divides her time between Maine, Virginia and Florida. At home in Maine, she tends extensive flower and vegetable gardens. She also finds time to volunteer in the Knox-Lincoln Extension office answering home gardening calls (and keeping us organized). In addition, she helps at Medomak Valley High School's Heirloom Seed Project where she's currently shelling bean (after bean after bean). In Florida, she volunteers at home gardening clinics, assists at training classes and works at the extension office.*

THANK YOU, PAT!



Children's Gardening Program Leader Training



Wednesday, December 10th

10:00—12:30

(Snow date: Tues, Dec 16 1:00 – 3:30)

Presented by: Frank Wertheim, Extension Educator

Location: University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Knox-Lincoln Counties Office
377 Manktown Rd., Waldoboro, ME

Directions: <http://www.umext.maine.edu/KnoxLincolnCounties/directions.htm>

To Register: Jeanne Picicello:
800-244-2104 x 117

jeannep@umext.maine.edu

by December 8 (Space is limited to 40 participants).

Kids Can Grow

Are you interested in learning about a new experiential model for youth gardening? No – it's not a curriculum – Kids Can Grow was developed in 1999 by University of Maine Cooperative Extension in York County. Through this five-month comprehensive gardening program for children ages 7 – 12, kids learn how to grow nutritious vegetables, herbs and beautiful flowers for their families in their own 3 x 5 foot raised bed gardens at home, using intensive square-foot gardening techniques. The kids participate in a series of hands on gardening classes at a central location, and then repeat what they learn at home using materials we supply, and home visits from a mentor Master Gardener Volunteer to assist and inspire them.

Top-Performing Coleus for Maine Gardens

Article By Dr. Lois Berg Stack, Ornamental Horticulture Specialist,
University of Maine Cooperative Extension

New coleus cultivars are often described as being highly self-branching, non-flowering and sun-tolerant. But, you know as a gardener that not all coleus cultivars perform equally in full sun. We assessed coleus in 2008, to address the challenge of selecting the right coleus for the right place.

We grew coleus in a greenhouse in spring 2008, hardened them off, and planted them in June in the Penobscot County Master Gardener Demonstration Garden. We fertilized organically according to soil test recommendations, mulched, provided adequate water, and did not prune, pinch or deadhead. On five dates in July and August we measured plant height, plant width, earliness to flower, and susceptibility to sunscald (the bleaching and browning of foliage in response to too much light). Table 1 presents an abbreviated report of our findings, for only the top-performing 16 cultivars.

Table 1: Summary of field performance of 16 top-performing coleus cultivars. ¹

<i>Cultivar:</i>	<i>Program/Brand:</i>	<i>Sunscald rating:</i>	<i>First date of flowering:</i>	<i>Average height x width 28 Aug (cm) ²:</i>
Aurora Peach	Ball FloraPlant	None	28 Aug	22.2 x 32.4
Big Red Judy	Proven Selections	Early only	28 Aug	65.2 x 79.2
Burgundy Wedding Train	The Flower Fields	None	None	15.7 x 39.4
Chocolate Drop	Proven Selections	None	None	23.5 x 49.7
Daffy	The Flower Fields	Early only	14 Aug	52.3 x 47.4
Grape Expectations	unbranded	None	None	30.1 x 28.6
Henna	Ball FloraPlant	Early only	None	61.2 x 72.4
Indian Summer	Ball FloraPlant	Early only	None	48.9 x 46.1
Lava Rose	Ball FloraPlant	None	None	18.6 x 45.7
Mint Mocha	Ball FloraPlant	Early only	None	43.6 x 49.1
Mt. Washington	Proven Selections	None	14 Aug	49.7 x 48.3
Peter's Wonder	unbranded	Early only	28 Aug	53.1 x 50.8
Royal Glissade	Proven Winners	Early only	28 Aug	46.6 x 53.1
Sky Fire	Proven Selections	None	14 Aug	39.8 x 55.5
Velvet Mocha	Proven Selections	Early only	None	41.9 x 61.0
Witch Doctor	The Flower Fields	Early only	None	44.7 x 35.6

¹ 79 cultivars were evaluated in this study.

² Foliage height is reported; flower stems above foliage were not included in measurements.

Top-Performing Coleus for Maine Gardens
Continued

How Can You Use This Information?

These same cultivars might display different size, level of sunscald and perhaps flowering dates in your specific location, but our comparison of plants grown identically provide a starting point for you when selecting coleus for your garden.

Here are ten tips for choosing coleus:

Select coleus that display no sunscald for full-sun locations.

Harden off coleus gradually before planting, to avoid early sunscald.

When in doubt about sunscald susceptibility, plant coleus in a partial-sunlight location.

In a low-maintenance garden, select coleus that do not produce flowers, to avoid deadheading.

In a moderate-maintenance garden, plant coleus that flower mid-August or later, to reduce deadheading.

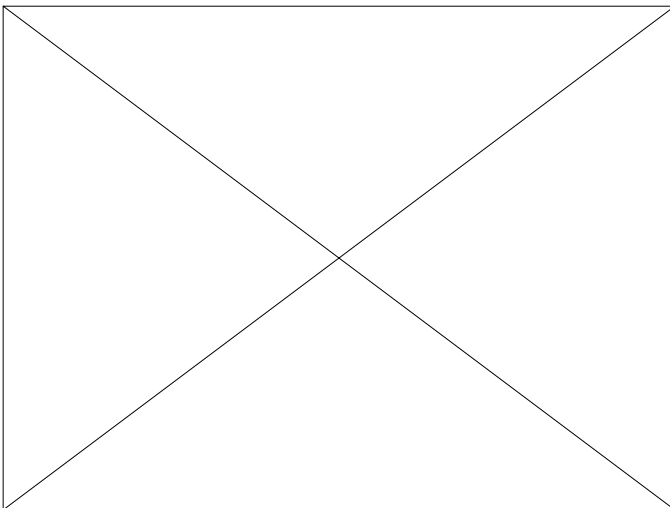
In a high-maintenance garden, choose coleus freely, and be prepared to deadhead as early as mid-June.

Expect most seed-propagated coleus to flower early and sunscald significantly in full sun.

Space plants according to mature width.

To see pictures of the coleus cultivars in Table 1, go to <http://www.google.com>, click on "images", enter the cultivar name plus "coleus", and click on "search images".

For complete data from this project, contact lstack@umext.maine.edu.



Acknowledgements: This project was funded by New England Floriculture, Inc. Thanks to summer student workers Aaron Fitzpatrick, Kate Garland, Jeff Hake and Emily Palmer; Extension Professors Jim Dill, Gleason Gray and John Jemison; and consultant Phil Stack for their contributions to this project. Thanks to Ball Horticultural Company; D.S. Cole; Four Star Greenhouse; Pleasant View Gardens; and The Flower Fields for seeds and cuttings:

Master Gardener Volunteers 2008/2009 Training Schedule

Location	Start Date	Time	Contact
Hancock County (Ellsworth)	January 23, 2009	Fridays, 8:30AM to Noon, plus two Saturdays	mperonto@umext.maine.edu
York County (Springvale)	February 4, 2009	Wednesdays, 9:00AM to 12:30PM	frankw@umext.maine.edu
Cumberland County (Maine Audubon, Falmouth)	February 6, 2009	Fridays, 1:00PM to 4:30PM (ornamentals)	awitt@umext.maine.edu
Androscoggin/ Sagadahoc Counties	March 24, 2009	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30PM to 3:30PM (vegetable and fruit crops)	tjackson@umext.maine.edu
Piscataquis	Tentatively Fall of 2009	TBA	dcoffin@umext.maine.edu htodd@umext.maine.edu
Oxford County	January 29, 2009	Thursdays, 5:30PM to 9:00PM, plus one weekend	bmurphy@umext.maine.edu
Franklin/Somerset Coun- ties (Skowhegan)	January 26, 2009	6:00 PM to 9:00PM	khopkins@umext.maine.edu htodd@umext.maine.edu
Penobscot County (Bangor)	February 3, 2009	Tuesdays, 6:00PM to 9:00PM, plus one weekend	ggray@umext.maine.edu
Kennebec/Waldo Coun- ties (China)	March—May 2009 Exact dates TBA	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30PM to 3:30PM	cfitzger-ald@umext.maine.edu Istanley@umext.maine.edu
Washington County (Shead Memorial High School, Eastport)	TBA		mperonto@umext.maine.edu
Aroostook County (Presque Isle)	TBA	TBA	aplant@umext.maine.edu
Knox/Lincoln/Waldo Counties	Our 2010 program will Begin October 2009	TBA	Istanley@umext.maine.edu

Upcoming Events

Maine Agriculture Trade Show

Augusta Civic Center
January 13 – 15, 2009

Maine Landscape and Nursery Association

Trade Show and Conference
FMI: <http://www.melna.org/>
January 20, 2009

Maine Garden Day

Saturday, March 28, 2009
Central Maine Community
College in Auburn

MAINE TREE CLUB OFFERS OUTINGS AND EDUCATION

Maine citizens and visitors can learn more about one of our state's greatest resources by joining the Maine Tree Club, an educational project designed for people of all ages to learn about trees, offered by University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the Maine Forest Service, and the Pine Tree State Arboretum.

The annual registration fee for the Maine Tree Club is \$20 per person, \$30 per couple, \$35 per family, and \$65 per group of up to 15. A limited number of Maine Tree Club scholarships are available for those in need. There is no deadline for registration.

Request a free informational brochure by calling University of Maine Cooperative Extension at 800-287-1471 or e-mailing lelwell@umext.maine.edu.

The International Master Gardener Conference

The Alexis Park Resort Hotel, Las Vegas
Cost: \$310 till Feb. 15; \$350 late registration if available
March 22-25

For Details: Ann Edmunds, (702) 257-5587 or edmundsa@unce.unr.edu or the Master Gardener Help Line at (888) 891-9662 (toll-free) or (702) 257-5555.

On the Web: www.unce.unr.edu/imgc

LAS VEGAS — Horticulture enthusiasts from around the world will converge on Las Vegas in March for the International Master Gardeners Conference at the Alexis Park Resort Hotel.

The event is sponsored by the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and coordinated by Southern Nevada Master Gardeners, whose program will explore such topics as pollinators, honey bees and colony collapse disorder; replacing turf with meadow plants; how to nurture young trees; and a 'show-and-tell' session on integrated pest management that will feature a guest appearance by environmental horticulturalist ML Robinson's 6-inch Black Emperor scorpion.

The conference is open to master gardeners as well as the general public, conference coordinator Ann Edmunds said. Master gardeners will have a chance to compare notes on horticulture with fellow experts from all 50 states and some foreign countries. Other attendees might find themselves signing up to become master gardeners as well, Edmunds said.

"They'll be inspired to learn more," she said.

Annual Report Totals

Master Gardener Program

It's been a busy year in Somerset County. 19 Master Gardeners volunteered 652 hours in their communities. The value of that volunteer time is \$9,317.

What did Master Gardeners do?

They weeded the demonstration gardens at the Extension Office, helped neighbors with gardening questions, organized and taught at community gardens, taught youth to garden, taught adult education classes, collected growth data on the shrub trials, advised on, designed and implemented solutions for town gardens and nature trails, worked with disabled gardeners, taught folks how to garden in containers, organized a food pantry for pets/small farm animals, contributed to the Plant-a-Row program, organized a plant swap, were interviewed and explained gardening on local cable TV, and made flower arrangements for the County Courthouse. Phew!

You are a busy group!

Thank you all for all you time and your commitment to your community. Thank you also telling me about your work and for giving me the opportunity to brag about the Master Gardener Program and its impacts!

See pictures of two projects on the next page.

Plant-a-Row For the Hungry

2009 Totals

2009 Master Gardener Program

The 2009 program begins on January 26, 2009 from 6-9 pm at the Somerset County Extension Office. This year the focus will be on ornamentals

Tell any of your friends or people you think might be interested about this opportunity! Applications are available by calling the Somerset office at 1-800-287-1495!

Penobscot – 14,947# + 5 dozen corn

Andy-Sag – 3750#

Franklin – 3200#

Kennebec – 530#

Piscataquis – 600#

Somerset – 664#

Knox/Lincoln/Waldo – 7509#

Cumberland – 7967#

Washington – 1700#

Oxford – 3610# + 65 dozen corn + 60 loaves of bread

York – 32,208#

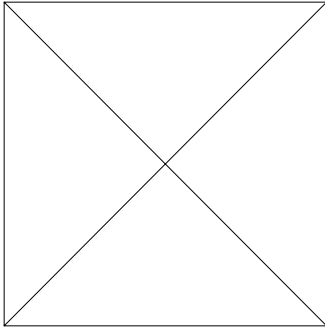
Grand Total: 76,671 pounds + 70 dozen corn + 60 loaves of bread

THANKS AGAIN TO THE MGRS WHO HAVE SET UP COMMUNITY GARDENS OR WHO ARE IN THE PROCESS OF SETTING UP A COMMUNITY GARDEN IN THEIR COMMUNITY. Call Kathy for more info on how to set up these gardens.

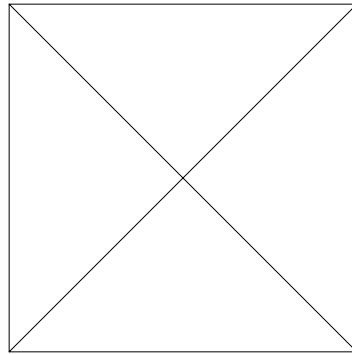
Master Gardeners in Action

Skowhegan traffic triangle project headed up by **Patricia Horine** and with the help of others.

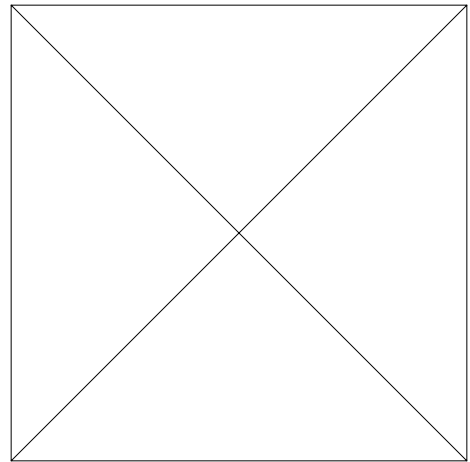
Before



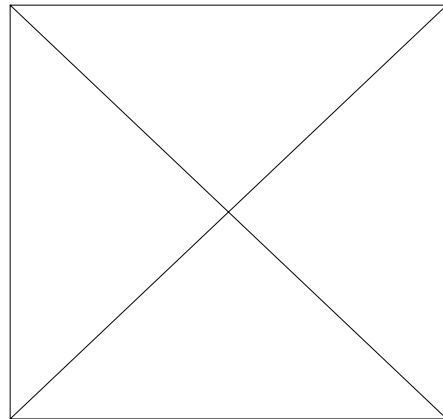
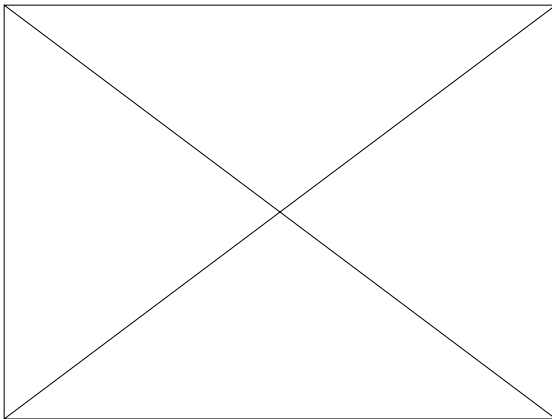
During



After!



Fairfiled InterFaith Food Pantry—a gardening project led by **David Perry** and **Jim Griffin** that benefited families who wanted to learn how to garden and provided food for the pantry to disperse in the community. The garden is located at Lawrence High School and students helped with spring bed preparation.



Change in Job Responsibilities for Kathy Hopkins

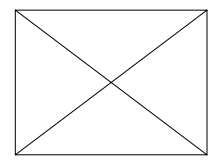
In the coming two years I will be working with Donna Coffin, Extension Educator for Piscataquis County, to lead Cooperative Extension's new Consumer Energy Education Program area., <http://www.umext.maine.edu/energy/default.htm>. Donna and I have hired a part time person, Hannah Todd, to take on some of our home horticulture responsibilities including planning and helping to conduct the 2009 Master Gardener program for Piscataquis and Somerset Counties. Welcome to Hannah!

Questions and complaints about discrimination in any area of the University should be directed to the Office of Equal Opportunity, The University of Maine, Room 101, 5754 North Stevens Hall, Orono, ME 04469-5754, telephone (207) 581-1226 (voice and TDD).

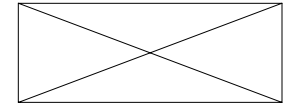
Where trade names are used, no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Cooperative Extension is implied.

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Master Gardener Volunteers News
A Newsletter for Maine Master Gardener Volunteers



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 7 County Drive
 Skowhegan, ME 04976
 1-800-287-1495
 474-9622
 Fax: 474-0374



Kathy Hopkins
 Extension Educator

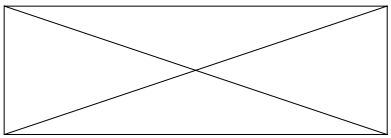
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