Our projects and programs seek to:

- Share research-based gardening information that inspires residents to cultivate healthy gardens and landscapes while conserving natural resources and wildlife habitat;

- Promote health, well-being and food security through gardening, better nutrition and increased physical activity;

- Connect children, families and communities with nature to grow a more sustainable future.
Extension Master GardenerSM Volunteers Are Everywhere

The Extension Master Gardener program operates in and partners with 84 of N.C. Cooperative Extension’s 101 local centers.

Visit ces.ncsu.edu to connect with your local program.

Local EMG Programs

Extension Districts:
- West
- North Central
- South Central
- Northeast
- Southeast

Extension Master Gardener (EMG) volunteers provide educational outreach connecting NC residents with the environmental, economic and health benefits of gardening.

2019 SNAPSHOT

- 3315 Volunteers
- 229,687 Volunteer hours (110 FTE)
- 370,338 NC residents reached
- $7.3M Value of volunteer time and training
- 57,532 Hours of continuing education + training
- 492 New volunteers trained

The work of EMG volunteers looks different all across North Carolina. Here are a few highlights of projects and programs from 2019.

WILSON COUNTY

Making STEM Come Alive

EMG volunteers at the Wilson Botanical Gardens have built an innovative garden, in hopes of inspiring young people to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Wilson County is home to several science and technology-related companies. Yet these companies traditionally must look elsewhere for qualified employees due to the county’s below-average high-school and college graduation rates. The STEM Garden provides middle and high school students with concrete, hands-on exposure to STEM principles. Area educators are already seeing positive results. Post-visit surveys indicate the majority of students improved their understanding of wetland environments, alternative energies, renewable resources, and hydroponics growing systems. In this way, EMG volunteers are helping equip young people with the confidence and knowledge to pursue STEM careers and make a difference in their community.
BRUNSWICK COUNTY

Making Sense of Pesticides

Residents want to make environmentally responsible choices, but with so many different products available, choosing the “right” product can be difficult and overwhelming. In response, EMG volunteers teamed up with Extension horticulture agent Sam Marshall to survey local garden centers and get a complete sense of what consumers face. They found nearly 300 brand-name pesticide products on the market, containing over 100 active ingredients! It was easy to see the public needed help making sense of it all. Their efforts yielded a fabulous new resource, Making Sense of Pesticides. This series of factsheets explains fungicides, herbicides, and insecticides, helping homeowners make informed decisions and protect natural resources.

Caldwell County

Producing More in Less Space

Interactive demonstrations led by EMG volunteers at Unity Park and Community Gardens have shown just how productive backyard gardens can be, no matter how small! Using a practice known as square foot gardening, a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables can be grown in a surprisingly small space. To encourage new gardeners and increase access to fresh food, EMG volunteers and NC State Extension agents hosted classes on how to grow, harvest, prepare and preserve homegrown produce. By sampling a variety of recipes, participants learned new ways to cook and enjoy vegetables. Classes were offered to adults as well as children in nearby HeadStart and 4-H programs. To reach an even wider audience, EMG volunteers partnered with the City of Lenoir to film a series of videos on square foot gardening that were then broadcast on local cable television.

Search for Excellence

is the recognition program of EMG volunteer work throughout North Carolina. It celebrates outstanding educational, group projects that result in significant learning by the public or EMG volunteers.

Keep Us Growing!

An important source of on-going support for the EMG program comes from the NC Extension Master Gardener Endowment. The annual interest is used to further the work of EMG volunteers across North Carolina. A tax-deductible donation is a wonderful way to celebrate a new class of EMG volunteers, honor the service of an individual EMG volunteer, or show appreciation for a county agent. Donate and know your gift will GROW!

Keep Us Growing!

2019 Contributions and Sources

Total $10,200 from the following sources:

- $1870 Individuals
- $3300 License Plates & Renewals
- $5000 Local EMG Groups & Associations

GIVE & GROW the endowment go.ncsu.edu/ncmastergardeners
CHATHAM COUNTY
Helping Neighbors Grow and Thrive

EMG volunteers know it’s not easy being new! They are also aware that many newcomers are eager to cultivate productive food gardens and eco-friendly home landscapes. But for many, moving to NC brings new challenges including a warm, humid climate and clay soil. To help both newcomers and existing residents, EMG volunteers created an easy-to-use website, featuring information specific to gardening in Chatham County. The site includes a garden center directory, recommended plant lists, guide to understanding local soils, local event calendar, and links to NC State Extension resources. With this project, EMG volunteers direct new residents to research-based information that promotes sustainable gardening practices. What a warm welcome!

BUNCOMBE COUNTY
Exploring Nature Through Summer Camp

Hands-on gardening experiences in childhood can cultivate a life-long appreciation for nature. EMG volunteers, in collaboration with the Asheville Parks and Recreation Department, provided this opportunity during a day camp focused on the basics and benefits of gardening. EMG volunteers planned and led hands-on activities that illustrated the importance of soil, insects, pollinators, birds, worms, flowers, fruits and vegetables. Students’ favorite activities were making worm bins, painting bird houses, insect hunting, pressing flowers, and making bird feeders. Students were particularly excited to bring home literature and activities to share with their families. EMG volunteers had as much fun as the kids!

PENDER COUNTY
Growing Community Connections

Each year, Pender County EMG volunteers reach hundreds of third grade students through their school outreach program. Activities are designed to help students think like scientists. They examine live earthworms, observe the magic of composting, and discover the purpose of plant parts. To encourage the students to continue gardening over the summer, EMG volunteers wanted to give each child a plant to take home at the end of the school year. Recently, their wish came true with help from the Cape Fear Community College Horticulture Program at the New Hanover Correctional Center. The program seeks to provide inmates with marketable skills that will help them find employment upon release. Inmates grow vegetables and annual flowers. While the vegetables are donated to local food banks, the flowers have traditionally been used to beautify the prison grounds. This year, at the request of the EMG volunteers, inmates grew over 500 marigolds, enough for every student in the school outreach program. Students took home the flowers plus a letter explaining who grew the plants and how to care for them. What a meaningful way to make unique connections in the community.

CONTACT

LUCY BRADLEY, State Director
CHARLOTTE GLEN, State Coordinator
NC State University • Dept. of Horticultural Science
Campus Box 7609, Raleigh, NC 27695-7609
P: 919-515-1226 | charlotte_glen@ncsu.edu

NC State Extension is committed to the value of diversity within our organization and to the provision of equal opportunity and non-discrimination for all employees and for all participants that engage or seek to take part in our programs.

We actively prohibit discrimination and harassment regardless of age, color, disability, family and marital status, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, political beliefs, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation and veteran status.

Explore your NC EMG Program
go.ncsu.edu/emg