Greetings,

Do you want to...

- Teach your children how to garden or start a school garden?
- Have a “greener” landscape?
- Become a Master Gardener to learn new skills and help your community?
- Get 24/7 research-based answers to all your plant and pest questions?

University of Maryland Extension’s (UME) offers three state-wide programs to make it happen- the Home and Garden Information Center (HGIC), Master Gardener Program (MG), and Grow It Eat It (GIEI). They are used by tens of thousands of residents who want to learn how to create healthy and sustainable gardens and landscapes. Our programs teach “best management practices” through online resources, telephone and e-mail consultations, and hands-on classes, plant clinics, and workshops. We directly address some of the largest environmental and public health issues of the day:

- Reducing pesticide and nutrient pollution… we teach Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices and have a demonstrated track record for reducing unnecessary pesticide use through personal consultations. We are also ramping up outreach education on lawn fertilization in response to the Fertilizer Use Act of 2011.
- Stormwater management... our MG volunteers and staff are trained to educate homeowners about cost-effective measures to “slow it down, spread it out, and soak it in.”
- Childhood obesity and food security…we work with teachers and nutrition educators to use gardening as a way of exposing kids to veggies. If you grow it you are more likely to eat it!  

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Services

- Toll-free expert advice 8 am-1 pm, Monday - Friday. Callers receive one-on-one assistance from Certified Professional Horticulturists 800-342-2507.
- Fact Sheets and other publications: Scores of fact sheets authored by Home and Garden faculty and horticulture consultants are available in printed and electronic versions. Request publications via phone, mail or website.
- Maryland Home and Garden e-newsletter: sent four times per year to subscribers. The newsletter contains timely articles and helpful tips.
- Statewide coordination of the Master Gardener and Grow It Eat It Programs.
- Internet services - hgic.umd.edu (includes Plant diagnostic, GIEI and MG websites)
  - Send a Question to our staff. Answers are received via e-mail within 48 hours.
  - View and download fact sheets, articles, photo galleries, and video clips.
  - Diagnostic website offers photographic keys to help residents diagnose and solve their plant problems.
  - Timely information delivered directly to clientele via Facebook, Twitter, and blog.

2011 Impacts

- 9,303 clients assisted by horticulture consultants via the HGIC’s toll-free phone number
- 482,753 unique visitors to the HGIC, Plant Diagnostic, Grow It Eat It and Master Gardener websites (combined) with a total of 615,778 user sessions
- 3,636 questions answered via online question submission service
- 3,030 subscribers to the GIEI Network News and 2,525 subscribers to the HGIC e-newsletter
- 35,024 people stay connected to HGIC and GIEI through Facebook, Twitter and blog
- 99 educational videos with 468,683 downloads
Grow It Eat It: Teaching Marylanders to Grow Their Own Food

Grow It Eat It (GIEI) is a HGIC-MG partnership and a “signature program” for UME’s Food Smart Impact Team. Maryland residents are eager for the food gardening knowledge, skill-building, and problem solving provided through GIEI around the state.

2011 GIEI Impacts:
• MGs taught 151 classes to about 4,681 residents
• 1,900 gardeners joined the GIEI network - a 26% increase over 2010
• GIEI website had 102,000 unique visitors - a 44% increase over 2010
• Dozens of GIEI displays and workshops around the state reached tens of thousands of Marylanders
• The GIEI blog - over 70,158 page views - a 83% increase over 2010
• Over 1,400 regular viewers/followers on Twitter and Facebook
• 28 new YouTube video clips on food gardening topics - 99 total videos; 555 subscribers

2011 Awards and Recognition

Three UME Master Gardener programs won “Search for Excellence Awards” at the 2011 International Master Gardener Conference in Charleston, WV.

- Anne Arundel County - “Grow It Eat It Summer Camps” (Innovative Programs category)
- Montgomery County - “Therapeutic Horticulture Program at Brooke Grove Retirement Village - Assisted Living (Special Needs Audience category)
- Calvert County - “Garden Smarter Program” (Workshops category)

HGIC Faculty and Staff: Jon Traunfeld - Center Director, UME Specialist, fruits and vegetables; and State Master Gardener Coordinator (E-mail: jont@umd.edu);
David Clement - UME Specialist, plant pathology;
Mary Kay Malinoski - UME Specialist, entomology; Maria Malloy - Business Manager;
Lynn Jacobson - Webmaster, administrative support; Jim Leith - Administrative support; Robin Harsey - State Advanced Training Coordinator, Master Gardener program; Certified Professional Horticulturists - Marian Hengemihle, Chris McComas, Ellen Nibali, Bob Orazi, Debbie Ricigliano, Lew Shell, Ginny Williams

Center Director and University of Maryland Extension Specialist

Social Media and Technology

Since 2009, HGIC has delivered information to a wider audience through social media. HGIC and GIEI each maintain active Facebook pages and Twitter feeds. These social networking tools allow current horticultural information to be delivered directly to our users through the portal of their choice. The interactive aspect of Facebook and Twitter give us direct and immediate feedback from our clientele.

The GIEI Food Gardening Blog allows select authors across the state to write longer articles on their food gardening experiences and include images to share with clientele. With almost 600 blog posts so far, the authors share their successes and challenges to making food gardening a more realistic endeavor. Clientele can subscribe to new blog posts via email subscription.

Maryland Master Gardeners - Growing Strong!

HGIC staff and faculty provided state-level support of Maryland’s rapidly growing Master Gardener program. Master Gardeners are regular users of HGIC fact sheets, web information, and horticulture hotline.

The Maryland Master Gardener Program, a volunteer education program taught and administered by University of Maryland Extension (UME), puts environmental power into the hands of the people who want to do their part to create sustainable gardens and landscapes and reduce pollution that affects Maryland’s water resources.

The state-wide program is active in 19 counties and Baltimore City. In 2010 our 1,540 certified Master Gardeners and Master Gardener interns gave 91,900 hours of dedicated service valued at $2.05 million. (2011 stats and impacts will be available in May.)

University of Maryland Extension programs are open to all citizens without regard to race, color, gender, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, or national origin.

Grow It Eat It: Teaching Marylanders to Grow Their Own Food

Maryland’s Food Gardening Network

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- Invasive species...we provide safe and effective solutions to the brown marmorated stink bug inside and outside the home, and help residents identify and deal with an array of invasive plant and pest species.

We have much to look forward to this year as we build on last year’s successes and identify new opportunities for projects, funding, and partnerships. Thank you for your interest in and support of HGIC and don’t forget to call or e-mail us when YOU have a plant or pest question!