Greetings,

2014 marks the 25th anniversary of the Home and Garden Information Center (HGIC), the trusted source of sustainable gardening information and answers for Maryland residents. We are available to anyone with a phone or internet access 24/7. Our information is research-backed and is delivered directly to you by faculty and staff members with many years of horticultural and pest management experience.

HGIC, the Maryland Master Gardener Program (MG), and Grow It Eat It (GIEI) are sister programs from University of Maryland Extension, located at the Central MD Research & Education Center in Ellicott City. Tens of thousands of residents use our resources each year to create healthy and sustainable gardens and landscapes. Our programs teach “best management practices” through online resources, telephone and web consultations, and hands-on classes, plant clinics, and workshops. We directly address some of the largest environmental and public health issues of the day.

It’s been a year of big changes at HGIC. In April, we moved and expanded our websites and adopted the national eXtension “Ask an Expert” system for answering your web-based gardening questions. Two fantastic individuals joined our staff in 2013: Dan Adler, Web and Communications Manager, who puts together our attractive and informative newsletter reaching 4,000 subscribers each month, and Sara Tangren, Ph.D., Associate Agent, who serves as Master Gardener Trainer, Native Plants & Sustainable Horticulture.

We have plans to add lots of new content to the HGIC website on gardening topics you’ve told us are important to you, such as organic gardening, pollinator conservation, and native plants. Watch for new videos and gardening tips and stories from around the state. Thank you for your 2013 support and patronage. We look forward to being a gardening partner and resource for you in 2014.

Center Director and University of Maryland Extension Specialist

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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.
- E-newsletter: sent monthly to subscribers; contains timely articles, video, and helpful tips.
- Statewide coordination of the Master Gardener and Grow It Eat It Programs.
- Internet services - extension.umd.edu/hgic (includes Plant Diagnostic, GIEI and MG websites)
  - “Ask Maryland’s Gardening Experts” a question. Answers are sent 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.

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**2013 IMPACTS**

- 7,213 clients assisted by horticulture consultants via HGIC’s toll-free phone number
- 642,888 unique visitors to the HGIC, Plant Diagnostic, Grow It Eat It and Master Gardener websites (combined)
- 4,312 questions answered via online question submission service
- 4,036 subscribers to the HGIC e-newsletter
- 6,510 people stay connected to HGIC and GIEI through Facebook and Twitter
- 45,247 unique visitors to our food gardening blog
- 112 educational videos with 189,288 views
**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 over 845 blog posts so far, the authors share their successes and challenges, making food gardening a more realistic endeavor. Clientele can subscribe to new blog posts via email subscription.

**2013 Testimonials**

By way of introduction, I am an Anne Arundel County Master Gardener. I have been wanting to tell you how much I appreciate the MG program that provides so many benefits in my life. From the beginning, before I even took the classes to qualify, my experience with the Master Gardener program has been empowering & rewarding. I was happy to take the classes, meeting many like minded people, and happier when I passed the TEST!

The Annual Training Day is a great venue for meeting new people, learning new things and hearing you and others speak about the important issues in our state. The HGIC newsletter is such a gift. I read it immediately when it arrives in my email. I am grateful to you, Robin, and the many behind the scenes people who make the Master Gardener program hum.

Gratefully,

Noreen K. Krispin
AACty Master Gardener
Class of 2006

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

Grow It Eat It (GIEI) is a HGIC-MG partnership. Master Gardeners teach food gardening skills to individuals and communities through classes and demonstration gardens. HGIC consultants answer food gardening questions via phone and website.

2013 GIEI Impacts:

- MGs taught 105 classes to about 2,150 residents
- 2,949 gardeners joined the GIEI network - a 29% increase over 2012
- GIEI website had 169,664 unique visitors
- Dozens of GIEI displays and workshops around the state reached tens of thousands of Marylanders
- The GIEI blog- over 81,765 page views
- Over 3,817 regular viewers/followers on Twitter and Facebook
- 73 YouTube video clips on food gardening topics - 112 total videos; 1,391 subscribers
- Represented UME at the White House Easter Egg Roll

**Maryland Master Gardeners- Growing Strong!**

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

The Maryland Master Gardener Program is a volunteer education program taught and administered by University of Maryland Extension (UME). It trains residents to practice and teach sustainable gardening that protects and conserves natural resources.

The state-wide program is active in 19 counties and Baltimore City. In 2013, our 1,688 certified Master Gardeners and Master Gardener interns gave 104,089 hours of dedicated service valued at $2.4 million.