URBAN HORTICULTURE

The need for environmental horticulture education and enrichment in Talbot County continues to grow as population and development increases. Residents are eager to learn how to grow their own food and learn of new ways to create more environmentally sustainable lawns and landscapes. Talbot UME provides environmental education, community outreach, volunteer commitment and educational demonstrations for the residents of the County.

New Program Educator - Starting September 17th, 2012 Mikaela Boley became the new Urban Horticulturist and Master Gardener Coordinator for Talbot UME. Born and raised in rural Wisconsin, Mikaela graduated from the University of Minnesota with a B.S. in Environmental Horticulture–Landscape Design. She has developed knowledge of the Eastern Shore through internships at Adkins Arboretum, Gibraltar Gardens in Wilmington, volunteer work at Longwood Gardens, and working as a horticulturist in the private sector. Mikaela intends to continue the positive image of horticulture and education within the community, to encourage proper environmental practices, and spread the enthusiasm of caring for the outdoors.

Environmental Education - Opportunities to educate both adults and youth was offered at community events such as Pickering Creek’s Harvest Hoedown, Talbot Ag Center’s Harvest Festival, and the Waterfowl Festival Weekend in downtown Easton. With over 750 visitors to these events, Extension continues to spread the word about our programs, information, and other outreach opportunities. Talbot UME also partnered with Philips Wharf Environmental Center on Tilghman Island to develop a rain garden in order to address run-off issues from a paved lot.

Community Outreach

"Ask a Master Gardener" continues to advise local residents through plant clinics, phone calls, emails, local events, and visits to the Talbot UME office. Roughly 300 cases were handled dealing with home and garden issues, insect , and plant disease identification. Master Gardeners educate community members with advice on plant selection, landscaping for water quality, and proper environmental care through public demonstration. They also held a series of lectures through the Speaker’s Bureau for Cabin Fever Relievers in February – May. Topics like living walls/roofs, soil education, and water garden design were covered through these courses.

From My Backyard to Our Bay - A new 44 page booklet was written, designed and published to offer solutions for living in harmony with the Bay. It describes the basic mechanisms of how we pollute, and provides specific “Bay-Wise” directions to reduce the nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment and other pollutants that flow into the Bay. For more information on the booklet or about Tred Avon Watershed grant visit http://www.tawaction.umd.edu

The Talbot County Office strives to be accessible, reliable and relevant to all residents of Talbot County and the Mid-Shore Region.

We are located at the Agriculture Service Center on Mary’s Court and are housed with other agricultural agencies that serve Talbot County. Our funding is a cooperative agreement between the Federal, State and County Governments and also includes grant, sponsorships and in-kind donations for programs.

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TALBOT COUNTY EXTENSION
FACULTY and STAFF

Mikaela Boley, Urban Horticulture/MG
Pam Chollet, Administrative Assistant II
Sherman Councell, Nutrient Management
Shannon Dill, AGNR Educator/CED
Tom Hutson, 4-H Youth Educator
Pat Murphy, 4-H Program Assistant
Allison Roe, Ag Program Assistant

ANNUAL REPORT 2012

4-H Youth Development
- 4-H Clubs
- Public Speaking
- Science, Engineering and Technology
- Volunteer Training and Management
- Community Service and Outreach

Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Nutrient Management
- Small Farm and New Enterprises
- Agronomic Crops and Marketing
- Crop and Pesticide Recommendations
- Farm Management and Business Planning

Urban Horticulture
- Master Gardener Volunteer Trainings
- Plant, Insect and Disease ID and Recommendations
- Sustainable Urban Horticulture Practices
- BayWise and Demonstration Gardens
- Junior Master Gardeners

Talbot County Faculty and Staff have generated the following totals in 2012

- Grant Support $367,379
- Solicited Funds $26,564
- In-Kind Support $9,865
- Volunteer Hours 3,696
- Volunteer Value* $64,157

*(Includes volunteer hours valued at $22.77 Independent Sector)
**AGRICULTURE and NATURAL RESOURCES**

Agriculture and Natural Resources are the foundation of Talbot County’s economy, rural character and rich history. Development pressure, regulations, cost of production and commodity prices continue to challenge this vital industry. Talbot UME provides outreach and research based information and education for agriculture production and farming.

**Talbot County Corn Club**—Acknowledged as the oldest continuous corn club in the country, the Talbot County Corn Club’s 61st year hosted 19 adult participants and 8 youth participants. The goals of the club include increased production, yield and profitability. The average yields for entries were 137 bu/ac while the Maryland average was 122 bu/ac.

**Annie’s Project**—Adapted from curriculum in the Mid-West, Annie’s Project is a farm management course for women involving the 5 areas of risk management (production, marketing, human resources, legal, financial). Since 2008 Annie’s Project has educated 357 farm women. In 2012, programming to 7 sites in Maryland and Delaware reaching 101 farmwomen.

**Digital Farming**—Businesses everywhere are beginning to incorporate smartphone, social media and digital technology into their business and marketing plans. Agriculture and rural businesses are no different. A total of 45 farmers were taught in 2012. End of class surveys asked participants about actions they plan to take as a result of the session 94% will register their business on national mapping pages, 100% will download agriculture and business applications, 95% will market products through social media, 96% will increase farm efficiency by incorporating technology, 97% will increase their overall marketing capacity and 93% felt they could increase overall farm income.

**Nutrient Management 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Talbot Co Acres Planned:</th>
<th>33,930 acres</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total number of Plans</td>
<td>393 plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Talbot County Producers:</td>
<td>68 farmers</td>
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<td>Agricultural acreage for Talbot County has 98.6% acres accounted for Nutrient Management Compliance. Farmers following nutrient management plans save money and protect the environment by efficient use of manure and fertilizer. The Talbot Extension Office plans over 42% of farmland in Talbot County.</td>
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**Beginning Farmers**—A statewide grant from USDA was received to create, develop and implement a beginning farmer program. The Maryland Collaborative for Beginning Farmer Success builds on existing Extension resources and partnerships with regional nonprofits, agricultural organizations, and experienced farmers to provide beginning farmers with easily accessible tools and practical, experience-based training on farm production, marketing, land management, business planning, and financial resources.

**4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Talbot County 4-H is open to all youth ages 5 through 18. Members select, enroll in, and learn about a variety of science, healthy living, and citizenship projects. Extension employees and volunteers coordinate exciting hands-on learning experiences for youth. Participation in 4-H helps members develop essential life skills including organization, time management, and communication. Talbot 4-H continually strives to reach new youth populations from diverse backgrounds within the county and across the state. The ultimate 4-H goal is to help young people grow to become caring, competent, capable, and contributing citizens.

**4-H Clubs and Outreach Education**

During 2012, a total of 240 youth were enrolled in community clubs (127 youth) and after school programs (113 youth). Members expanded their skills and accomplishments through venues including public speaking contests, the Talbot County Fair, the Maryland State Fair, and other community events. Club members completed numerous service projects including recycling, nursing home visits, and creation of medical supply care packages. In addition, more than 3,500 youth and adults participated in educational programs taught at schools and community locations. Many of these programs resulted from partnerships with local businesses and civic organizations.

**Science Literacy and Environmental Science Education**

The U.S. is experiencing a decline in young people entering science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers. To address this need, 4-H offers programs that help youth develop scientific literacy, learn scientific skills, and explore STEM careers. Health care, the number one employment sector in the county, is the program’s current focus. In 2012, Adventures in Health Science introduced 42 youth ages 10 through 18 to more than 15 health careers through face-to-face interactions with medical professionals. Health care education can set local youth on a path to success: health care workers earn 26% more than workers in other sectors and experience higher job stability.

Equally essential environmental education is accomplished through outreach programs. More than 1,000 youth and adults in clubs, schools, and local communities participated in programs that helped them better understand the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the importance of agriculture.

**Safety and Health Education**

Preventable household accidents, substance abuse, and poor nutrition are major causes of injury and illness for Maryland residents. Talbot 4-H offers prevention-oriented programs that contribute to improved safety, health, and nutrition. In 2012, more than 500 residents learned about safety and healthy living and more than 2,000 learned to make wise food choices. To ensure equal access to Extension’s educational opportunities, the 4-H clubs and outreach education initiative provides prevention education to a wide array of project and life skill learning experiences for local youth.

**GRANT SUPPORT**

In 2012, Talbot 4-H received a total of $111,658 in grant funds:

- $97,008 to support science education including a three-year water quality education initiative
- $14,650 to support safety and health education including drug awareness in the public schools and community nutrition.