

Sheboygan County Master Gardeners

We had 101 paid members, with 65 recertified for 2008.

In 2007 we volunteered	106	hours in youth education
	353	hours in community education
	2,904	hours in support services
and participated in	1,625	hours of continuing education



The General Master Gardener Volunteer Training Course was offered in 2007 with twenty-five participants.

The Sheboygan County Master Gardener volunteers were involved in 20 projects, enabling volunteers numerous opportunities to participate.

Major Accomplishments or Projects:

1. MGVs staffed the *Horticultural Hot Line*, May through September, to answer homeowner horticultural questions.
2. MGVs developed and staffed an exhibit at the Sheboygan County Fair and participated in events involving community education throughout the year.
3. MGVs were responsible for the beautification and maintenance of the Plank Road Trail, a Sheboygan County bicycle and walking path.
4. Other projects included: Continuing Education & Programs; Garden Walks; Habitat for Humanity; Kohler Andrae State Park; Waelderhaus Herb Garden; Newsletter; Mentor Committee; October 11th Memorial and Dutch Settlement Historical Marker; Rocky Knoll Landscaping; Sensory/Peace Gardens; Sheboygan Boys & Girls Club Garden; and Speakers Bureau.



Highlighted Project: Purple Loosestrife Eradication

Purple loosestrife (PLS) is an invasive wetland perennial from Europe and Asia causing concern in many eastern Wisconsin wetlands. Kohler Andrae State Park, located in Sheboygan County, has a large infestation of PLS. Different methods used for controlling the spread of PLS include mechanical, chemical and biological. Biological control is most effective in large areas and involves rearing of leaf-feeding *Galerucella* beetles. This beetle feeds exclusively on PLS, reducing the plant's ability to reproduce and survive the winter, so its activity eventually reduces PLS populations. It was introduced in Wisconsin in 1994.

Twelve MGVs worked on this project throughout the year, supported by a DNR grant. Similar projects were supported by DNR in Calumet and Manitowoc counties. It started with pulling and digging root stock of PLS out of the marsh after the frost was out of the ground. The root stock was placed in individual pots where it would be grown in a large netted cage (12x12x6) throughout the summer months. The netted cage provided a protected rearing place with an ample food source for a growing population of soon-to-be-released *Galerucella* beetles. Approximately 300,000 *Galerucella* beetles were raised and released in 8 locations.

During the summer, Milwaukee Public Television, Channels 10/36, filmed and produced a 20-minute



segment which was shown on the *Outdoor Wisconsin* program. The segment highlighted the contribution of volunteers in helping to control PLS. The Fox News affiliate, Channel 6 from Milwaukee, also filmed a segment for an evening news special program.

In preparation for 2008, MGVs plotted all known areas in the county where PLS is currently growing. These areas will be targeted for beetle release next year. GPS units were used to locate and map areas for PLS eradication in the future.