

50th Anniversary Spokane County

Since 1974 the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program in Spokane County has provided horticultural and environmental stewardship education, resources, and support to our communities. From teaching about research-based landscaping practices that help people protect themselves and others against potential loss due to wildfire, to engaging with communities about best practices for growing food, protecting pollinators, and reducing water waste in landscapes, Spokane County WSU Extension Master Gardeners make real differences in the communities they serve.

In the past 50 years, over 900 people have trained in Spokane County as Master Gardeners. Currently, there are 158 active Master Gardeners and the 2024 training class will add approximately 30 new trainees to the program. The youngest trainee was 24 years old and the oldest Master Gardener when she retired was 93!

The program has:

- Organized youth programs in schools and at Fairchild Air Force Base.
- Provided adaptive gardening programs in nursing homes and at St. Luke's Rehabilitation Hospital.
- Partnered with over 15 community gardens to demonstrate and support food production for families.
- Staffed plant clinics at the Extension building and in libraries, public gatherings, farmers' markets and other settings.
- Offered speakers for conferences, meetings, garden clubs and other community groups through the Speaker's Bureau.
- Held highly anticipated plant sales every spring.
- Conceived and created demonstration gardens at the Extension building and other locations.
- Built and manage a 501(c)3 Foundation to support the program into the future.
- Created gardening fact sheets with regionally relevant information to be shared free online.
- Partnered with city, county, and state agencies to assist residents in building landscape resiliency.
- Provided internships to prepare WSU students for careers in the green industry.
- Identified new invasive pest species in the county before they became widespread, allowing farmers and orchardists time to prepare.
- Won prestigious Search for Excellence Awards at the International Master Gardener Conferences twice for the Youth Program and the Plant Clinic's Specialist program.