

# GEORGIA MASTER GARDENER EXTENSION VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Learn

Serve

Grow



## Spotlight: Gardening with Youth

Master Gardener Extension Volunteers (MGEVs) in Lowndes County have been working to introduce urban youth to agriculture since 2012. MGEVs want to offer youth the ability to learn first-hand the source of their food by creating vegetable gardens and fruit orchards at all Valdosta city schools.

Early vegetable garden work included the Pinevale Learning Center Garden project, the reclamation of an abandoned garden (170'X76') requested by the Valdosta City School Superintendent. The garden was subsidized by a Lowe's Toolbox for Education Grant, a grant from the Georgia Master Gardener Association, and the generous support of several businesses, FVSU and UGA Extension in Lowndes County, and a cadre of MGEVs.

The garden was an outreach to Pinevale, an alternative school for students referred because of academic, social, or judicial reasons. MGEVs gave presentations on landscape design, water and energy management, and the introduction of low-maintenance ornamentals and fruit-bearing trees. Students participated in transplanting the existing shrubs and trees and planting of new ones. Attention was given to the selection of easily maintained trees so that students could replicate the choices at home. Students were able to propagate some selections to take home. A vegetable and herb garden was added later, and students participated in installing a drip irrigation system, planting, and harvesting.

MGEVs in Lowndes County have expanded the project from the Pinevale site to seven schools in Valdosta and work closely with teachers in the development of gardens and orchards. In acknowledgement of this hard work, MGEVs have been recognized for their efforts with the Community Service/ Humanitarian Award given by Farm Home Ministries. Also, Annie Barbas was recognized as "Woman of the Year" for her leadership of the project.

Gardens and Orchards in Valdosta City Schools  
Valdosta, GA  
Served by MGEVs from Lowndes County



### 2015 Project Contributions:

Volunteer Hours: 781

Work Days: 17

Harvest Dates: 3

After school Meetings: 8

*Special thanks to MGEVs working with the school gardens and orchards!*

MGEVs note that, as a result of this project, more and more youth are becoming interested in agriculture. The local community understands the importance of this project's goal to educate youth about agriculture and has generously supported the orchards and gardens with donations.



The Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program prepares volunteers to support UGA Cooperative Extension in delivering gardening information to Georgia's citizens and communities. Since 1979, Master Gardeners and UGA Extension have helped Georgians become healthier, more productive, financially independent and environmentally responsible.