

Loudoun County Master Gardeners to Represent State in National Competition

Loudoun County Master Gardeners (LCMG) Mame Ward, Deb Fay, Linda van Seeters, Mary Lee Adams and Jane Pratt Shilling represented the Loudoun Cooperative Extension Office during the Virginia Cooperative Extension's 18th Annual College held June 21-26 at the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg.

The college is attended by Master Gardeners representing counties and independent jurisdictions throughout the State. The Master Gardeners attended a wide selection of classes, such as "Land Care Stewardship," "Micropropagation," "Hypertufa Making," "Wildlife Habitat at Home" and "Exotic Invasives."

For this year's State competition, Loudoun Master Gardeners featured their Demonstration Garden at Ida Lee Park in Leesburg. Exhibited were pictures of the garden, including the monthly garden parties with featured speakers; newspaper articles on the garden; the overall garden layout; the "Trumpet Vine" garden news; various handouts; information on the garden's ongoing contributions of produce to Interfaith Relief; and a display of lavender wands created by Master Gardener Fatmi Anders from lavender grown in the Drought Tolerant garden. Loudoun's exhibit (partially shown in the featured picture) won two trophies. A panel of judges awarded them the "Sustainable Landscape Management, Food and Nutrition" trophy as well as the "Best Overall Exhibit" trophy. With this second award, Loudoun will represent Virginia in the National competition for the Award of Excellence Program.

The Loudoun Master Gardeners received individual awards as well at an evening ceremony. Mame Ward received a 500-hour pin and certificate for service to the LCMG Program, while Linda van Seeters and Mary Lee Adams received their 250-hour pins and certificates. Another Master Gardener, Fatmi Anders, who did not attend the college worked alongside those who did attend to create the winning exhibit.

The public is encouraged to visit this "award winning" organic garden at Ida Lee Park. There are a variety of gardens to see there (e.g., shade, children's herb, bulb, drought tolerant, evergreen, butterfly, and even a small "grandmother's" garden, along with a large vegetable garden which features companion planting. If you visit the garden on Tuesday or Thursday mornings, you may talk with the Master Gardeners who are working there. Anyone interested in becoming a Master Gardener should contact the LCMG Helpline (703-771-5150) for information and have your name added to the upcoming 2006 class list.