

## Extension Master Gardener Programs Teach, Lead and Serve Local Communities

### The Situation

Extension Master Gardeners (EMG) are volunteers who complete 40 hours of basic training with additional training every year. EMG's are a vital part of KSRE serving as unpaid staff providing quality, research-based information to the public. There are more than 1,301 EMGs serving communities across the state.

### What We Did

Horticulture agents often rely on EMG volunteers to provide horticultural information to the public to maximize impact of their local programs. Examples of EMG programs throughout the state include; building and maintaining teaching demonstration gardens, answering thousands of client questions on garden hotlines, teaching horticulture programs to both youth and adults and working in local food systems through community garden and farmer's markets efforts.

### Outcomes

Over 110,513 contacts were made with the public through outreach events. This does not include public events such as county fairs and garden shows. In 2019, EMG's donated a total of 99,179 volunteer hours to their local communities! The value of this volunteer work is \$2,697,669 according to Independent Sector.

### Success Story

Through local community gardens, our EMG volunteers donated 68,253 pounds of produce to food pantries in 2019. According to Feeding America, in Kansas, 368,770 people are struggling with hunger - and of them 129,780 are children. Our volunteers work to not only grow food for the food insecure, but also to teach adults and children how to grow their own food. This work happens in our demonstration gardens, youth programs, seminars, local events and through individual contacts in our local offices. The Kansas Garden Guide, a comprehensive guide to growing food in Kansas, has remained KSRE's most downloaded publication.

### Contacts

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Volunteers harvest a cucumber in a Reno County community garden.



A Reno County Extension Master Gardener teaches youth about types of vegetable seeds at the Reno County YMCA community garden.