

## **Spooner Ag Research Station Teaching & Display Garden Wins another National Award**

For the fourth consecutive year, the Teaching & Display Garden located at the Spooner Agricultural Research Station was recognized for its educational efforts and creative landscape designs and promotion of new proven varieties of flowers and vegetables. The second place award was given by the All-America Selections (AAS) organization in their fifth annual landscape design contest.

The award winning garden is a joint effort between the Spooner Agricultural Research Station, the Spooner Area UW-Extension Office and UW-Extension North Country Master Gardener Volunteers. The Spooner garden completed against 16 other entrants in their category from across the U.S. and in Canada.

This year's contest theme was incorporating pollinator education in the landscape design and to garden visitors. According to Kevin Schoessow, UW-Extension Agricultural Development Educator for Burnett, Washburn and Sawyer Counties, "As in the past this award was a direct result of many hours of creative work by UW-Extension Master Gardener Volunteers."

Being recognized as one of the top AAS Display Gardens in the nation for four consecutive years should not come as a surprise to those who have visited the Teaching & Display Garden. In addition to 100's of varieties of annual and perennial flowers and vegetables, the garden is signed with many 'teachable moments' to help educate visitors.

Since 1999, Schoessow has been coordinating UW-Extension Master Gardener Volunteers to promote, foster and support horticulture education in local communities. The Teaching & Display Garden is a center piece in their efforts. Each year they host multiple workshops, seminars and trainings out in the garden including their annual Twilight Garden Tour in August to inspire gardeners and educate the public about gardening and plants that grow best in the area.

A portion of this larger garden is an official All-America Selections Display Garden. AAS offer gardeners reliable new varieties of flowers and vegetables that have proved their superior garden performance in trial grounds across North America. For the contest each display garden is responsible for creating and executing the design and generating publicity surrounding the contest. The gardens must then submit proof of publicity for the designed garden and AAS Winners, as well as an overall description of their design.

For this contest UW-Extension Master Gardener Volunteers focused on four pollinator species. Using unique plant combinations and spacing they created individual plantings that looked like a moth, butterfly, bee and hummingbird. These beds included signage and other props that highlighted the importance of each. The judges gave Spooner high marks for their educational seminars series focused on pollinators, their signage and garden structures and for registering their garden as an official Monarch Waystation. They continue to be an avid and enthusiastic

promoter of the AAS Display Garden. In addition to promoting through state and local newspapers and radio, social media and via the UW-Extension program, the garden partnered with the Washburn County Tourism to promote the gardens through their websites and the Washburn Co. Visitor's guide.

Other Category I winners (less than 10,000 annual visitors) were, first place, Master Gardeners Association of Tippecanoe Country, Lafayette, Indiana; Jennings Park Master Gardener Display Garden, Marysville, Washington, second place 'tie'; Kenosha County Center Display and Demonstration Garden, Bristol, Wisconsin, second place "tie".

Category II winners (between 10,001 and 100,000 annual visitors) were, first place, Noelridge Park Gardens, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; second place, Town of Oakville-Shell Park, Oakville, Ontario, Canada; third place, Hidden Lake Gardens – MSU, Tipton, Michigan.

Category III winners (over 100,000 annual visitors) were, first place, Norseco at the Botanical Garden of Montreal, Montreal, Quebec, Canada; second place, Boerner Botanic Gardens, Hales Corners, Wisconsin;

More information about the contest including color photos of all the contest winners can be found on the AAS website at <http://all-americaelections.org/>

The Teaching & Display Garden is located on Orchard Lane one mile east of Spooner off Hwy 70. The garden is open to the public for self-guided tours from April through October. Group tours are available upon request. More information can be provided by Schoessow or the Research Station staff at 715-635-3506 or 1-800-528-1914.

The University of Wisconsin Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming. Requests for reasonable accommodations for disabilities should be made prior to the date of the program or activity for which it is needed.



### **ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION**

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