



Ohio State HCS News

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New Statewide Master Gardener Coordinator Named



Pam Bennett, an OSU Extension Educator and horticulture director for Clark County, has been appointed Ohio's new statewide Master Gardener volunteer coordinator.

Two years after Ohio State University Extension's statewide Master Gardener coordinator position was dissolved due to lack of funds, it's now been given new life.

Pamela Bennett, an OSU Extension Educator and horticulture director for Clark County, has been appointed the new statewide Master Gardener Volunteer coordinator. "I'm really excited about it. I'm going to have a lot of fun working with the Master Gardeners," said Bennett. "They are amazing people and the diversity, gardening background, horticulture ideas and experience they bring to the table is unmatched."

An Ohio State College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences alum, Bennett (BS 1981 Horticulture, MS 2000 Agriculture Education) has 11 years of industry experience in horticulture and has worked at OSU Extension's Clark County office since 1992, starting out as a program assistant. She applauds the college's commitment to its Master Gardener programs and its desire to revitalize a position deemed important to the growth of horticulture and crop science throughout the state.



"After the position was dissolved, a group of Master Gardener state specialists, educators and program coordinators came together and formed a committee to try to keep Master Gardener programs at both the county and state levels viable. And we were treading water to keep the program afloat," said Bennett. "We really appreciate administration's efforts in showing their support for our programs and the willingness to commit the dollars to it."

The Ohio Master Gardener Volunteer coordinator oversees nearly 3,000 Master Gardeners in more than 60 counties, and

the various horticulture programs targeted to the public, such as plant clinics, gardening demonstrations and classes, community gardens, hotlines, and demonstration gardens.



Master Gardener volunteers help prepare material for a course on identifying herbaceous ornamentals.

As Master Gardener coordinator, Bennett plans to increase the visibility of statewide programs, strengthen volunteer training, increase fundraising programs, and expand the Master Gardener manual. She also plans to collaborate with Dr. **Tim Rhodus** and his HCS Digital Technology Team to improve the Master Gardener Web site and develop additional online horticulture resources.

"It can be overwhelming, deciding what needs to be done as opposed to what can be done. We haven't even begun tapping into the resources of these programs yet," said Bennett. "But we've got a great group of strong, passionate people and we'll do nothing but move forward from this point on."

The part-time position will be effective for one year and then re-evaluated for potential continuation. To reach Bennett, call (937) 328-4607, or bennett.27@osu.edu. For more information about the program log-on to mastergardener.osu.edu.

Watch a narrated slideshow of this story with additional photos here: [New Statewide Master Gardener Coordinator Named Slideshow](#). Free [Quicktime](#) software is required to view the slideshow.

Story by Candace Pollock. Bennett photo by Jodi Miller. Master Gardener photo by Victor van Buchem. Web publishing by [Victor van Buchem](#).

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