

Master Gardeners Garden Tour 2022

President Lynda Pollock asked me to lead the spring garden tour. I agreed to take on this big task so that we could focus on the importance of native plants to the environment. Jane Trentin shares my belief that native plants are very important for the environment. I chose the title "Gardening for Beauty and the Environment". We also wanted to have gardens that included growing some vegetables and fruits.

Selecting the gardens was the first task. We first asked for volunteers at the September meeting. People were not quick to volunteer. Jane Matthews was the first to volunteer her garden. She and her husband have a large (2acre) property with many native and non-native plants. They also have some large old trees and old barns. The only negative to this garden is that it is on a busy street with no street parking. Mary Ann Hindes and Greg Mauldin were the next volunteers. It is a large property with ample parking. Lynda Pollock, a busy president, volunteered her garden and the garden of a neighbor who is a new gardener. Slow Pour is a demonstration garden tended diligently by Tim Mullen and several master gardeners. Wes Nettleton and several master gardeners lead a community garden. I enjoyed visiting these gardens several times and spending time with other master gardeners who really enjoy their gardens...

Marketing and publicity were next on the agenda. I had no expertise in this area. The leaders of the previous garden tour kept excellent records of what they did. They had made a "save the date card". I asked the daughter of a friend to help me. She has a college degree in commercial art but has not worked recently. She designed a great card, but the card had some important errors that I did not find. The card had to be reprinted. The card was given to GMG at March meeting for them to distribute to their garden clubs and neighbors. The card was taken to the main branch of public library and given to all branch libraries. The card was also distributed at the MG plant sale. Antiques of Old Town distributed the STD cards and agreed to sell tickets for the tour. The weekend before the tour, Kathy Hartman gave cards to local florist to include in their Mother's Day arrangements.

A copy of the card was put on Master Gardeners website and Facebook page. Becky Wolary agreed to monitor the page and Kathy Hartman mailed the tickets. Kathy had a list of people who bought tickets online last tour, she sent them an

email about this year's tour. Kathy was very helpful and was an excellent resource to help with tickets.

Last tour a local magazine "Up Close in Tucker and Lilburn" ran a featured article about the garden tour. Jane Trentin contacted the magazine and they agreed to run an article in April edition. Lynda Pollock wrote a great article about her garden and the tour. Her photo was on the front of the magazine. We listed the garden tour on the calendar of "The Market Bulletin".

The actual ticket for the tour was beautiful and contained much information about the gardens, the sponsors, and the Gwinnett Master Gardeners Association. It was a challenge to get the ticket ready to hand out at the April MG meeting. Unfortunately, there was an error on the address of one of the gardens. We corrected the error by hand.

The weather the day of the tour was dry and a little warm. I visited the gardens of Mary Ann and Greg, Jane Matthews, and Slow Pour. Parking was a problem at Jane's garden. On the ticket we had asked people to park at a church ¼ mile from her garden. I ran a shuttle from the parking lot to her house for about 2 hours. People appreciated the ride in the hot afternoon.

I asked people how they knew about garden tour. Jane Matthews had many friends who came to tour. Some people learned of tour from plant sale, some from Lilburn magazine, some from Smoke Rise neighborhood newsletter, two people were repeats from last tour email, two people from extension service, four from Lilburn Women's Club—on line.

We did not sell as many tickets as we had planned. We sold 76 tickets; last tour they sold 250. We sold 16 tickets online; last tour 100 tickets.

On the positive side, the gardens were not crowded and people could ask questions and talk to docents and gardeners. One of the goals is education and we were able to do that. We did make money, \$1,054.79 Leading the tour required many hours of work and the help of many people. I am glad that I did the work. I am disappointed that we did not sell more tickets. I think that the best way to sell more tickets is for each master gardener to sell tickets to their neighbors and friends.

Suggestions for next tour.

It would be great to have chairman of tour and gardens one year in advance. I know this would be difficult thing to do. If we had more time, I think there would have been fewer errors in printing.

It would be good to have the tour in the northern part of the county. I think there are fewer master gardeners in that area so it would be a challenge.

It would be good to have more master gardeners helping with tour or buying tickets.

Read the notebook from 2020, they kept excellent records.