

Master Gardener Plant Sale This Saturday

By Larry Caplan, Extension Horticulture Educator, Vanderburgh County, IN

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More than 10,000 plants will be for sale at the Vanderburgh 4-H Center this Saturday, May 7, during the "Dig...Plant...Grow!" Plant Sale sponsored by the Southwestern Indiana Master Gardener Association, Inc. (SWIMGA).

Perennial and annual flowers for sun and shade gardens, as well as water plants, vegetables, herbs, and beautiful Mother's Day gifts will be available from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Central time. Master Gardeners will be on hand throughout the day to answer gardening questions. All plants have been grown out in our members' gardens and greenhouses.

This plant sale provides the financial resources needed by SWIMGA to maintain nearly 20 public demonstration gardens in Vanderburgh, Warrick and Posey counties. Our "crown jewel" garden is the 1.2-acre Master Gardener Display Garden, located on the north side of the old Evansville State Hospital grounds, between the American Red Cross and the Eykamp Boy Scout headquarters. In addition to ornamental plant gardens and the newly renovated historic log cabin, the Victory Garden at this location produces over 10,000 pounds of vegetables each year, all of which are donated to the Tri-State Food Bank.

The plant sale also funds our numerous educational programs and projects. Master Gardeners work with several schools in the Evansville area, teaching science topics through the use of gardening. We have helped launch several community gardens, and serve as advisors during the growing season.

This fall, on October 15, SWIMGA will be hosting the Ohio Valley Garden Conference, which is open to the public. We'll have speakers, both local and out-of-town, to share their knowledge with us, as well as dozens of vendors selling plants and garden-related merchandise. In 2017, we will host our biennial Garden Walk, which you won't want to miss.

If you would like to be part of this growing organization, I will be teaching the next Master Gardener class starting the first week of September. We will meet at Ivy Tech Community College on Evansville's First Avenue, with two classes running simultaneously: Thursday evenings (6 to 9 pm) and Friday mornings (9 am to noon). I will have more details in a few weeks, and will post them in this column. If you would

like to get on my mailing list, you can contact me at the Extension office at either (812) 435-5287, or by email at LCaplan@purdue.edu.

Just a side note about the Master Gardeners: we are primarily a teaching group. We love helping schools, neighborhood associations, and others with their gardens, and we're not afraid of getting our hands dirty and working alongside you. However, we are not set up to take over your garden and do the maintenance for you. If you have a garden project that you would like our expertise or help with, please contact me during the winter, before the end of January, when we are still deciding which projects to support for the upcoming year.