

Elvenia J. Slosson Endowment Fund Grant Proposal Final Report for work performed July, 2007 to June, 2008

Title A Demonstration Garden Designed to Educate the Public about Gardening Challenges in the Foothills

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Introduction

The Demonstration Garden developed by the Master Gardeners of Calaveras County is a unique teaching tool and information resource for all county residents. It is ideally situated at the Government Center affording a highly visible and easily accessible location. Public educational programs are offered to groups and individuals ranging in age from pre-schoolers to senior citizens. Master Gardeners are committed to extending information that promotes gardening in the foothills, encourages all home gardening endeavors and inspires non-gardeners to give it a try.

Grant funding targeted three areas: signage, reference books and printing of a garden brochure.

Goals and Objectives

- 1.) Create signage for educational purposes
- 2.) Improve the reference library at the demonstration garden
- 3.) Develop a Demonstration Garden brochure

Discussion

Signs mounted in both metal and plastic holders have been utilized for identifying vegetables, herbs and flowers in various stages of growth. Use of descriptive and pictorial signs has enabled master gardeners to correctly identify plants as they grow and allowed visitors to take self-guided tours. In-house use of a color laser printer minimized printing costs, yet delivered high quality signs that can be updated as the needs of the garden change.

The well-publicized open garden day events have become increasingly popular due to the timely topics presented and the availability of master gardeners to identify pests and plants, diagnose plant problems and answer general home gardening questions. Carefully selected reference books added an invaluable on-site resource in the Learning Center for master gardeners to use when helping garden visitors with their questions.

The Demonstration Garden brochure was developed to give visitors information about each area of the garden. It includes a brief history of the garden, a map, picture and description of each area of the garden and how to join the Master Gardener Program. This brochure was used at the grand opening event and will be updated for future use as the garden develops.

Project Successes

Last year saw increased usage of the garden as an outdoor classroom for all ages. Funding from the Elvenia J. Slosson Foundation has greatly enhanced the usability of the garden by providing signage and reference books that are used frequently and will continue to help extend learning at the garden.

