

# Texas Master Gardener <sup>sm</sup>

## 2008 Annual Report

### *Expanding the capabilities of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service*

The overwhelming dedication of the Texas Master Gardener volunteers has once again reached top numbers. Eighty-eight County Extension Master Gardener programs trained over 1,240 Texas Master Gardener Interns in 2008. To gain certification, each Intern must contribute a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service. This expanded the Texas Master Gardener program to over 6,402 volunteers, providing 454,036 hours of their time to Extension educational projects. This service, equivalent to 227 full-time employees, increases the human capacity of Extension by 17 percent. The economic value of this service translates to a \$9 million benefit to the State of Texas.

This year, Master Gardeners reached more citizens in their local communities than ever before. These highly trained and knowledgeable volunteers answered 72,519 phone calls that come in to the county office, helped establish and maintain 208 youth gardens and 339 demonstration gardens, and provide a local resource on 50 county websites.

Also, in 2008 the speaker bureaus have become much more effective in reaching their target audience. There were 2,220 presentations given that reached 68,087 local citizens. The number of presentations is almost half of what it was two years ago. However, an additional 18,000 people received research based information about horticultural practices.

The efforts of Master Gardeners are clearly reflected in their devotion to the organization and to helping others. The dedication of Master Gardeners has allowed Extension to multiply its efforts and continue to expand educational programs to new audiences across the state.

