

BCMGA Annual Committee Report

Committee: Fairgrounds Entrance Gardens Year: 2023

*Number of Active Members: 10 *Number of Public Contacts: 30+

*Number of volunteer hours (estimates are fine): 400

Purpose of Committee:

Create and maintain gardens demonstrating sustainable landscape gardening practices at the Benton County Fairgrounds. Each of the seven gardens addresses a common local gardening challenge. These include pollinator support, bird support, water conservation, deer resistance, cottage-style, child-friendly, and use of native plants. A corollary purpose is to expand MG knowledge by allowing participating MGs to research plants appropriate to the individual garden's characteristics and test those plants' suitability to their intended purpose.

Goals for the year:

Improve educational signage

Ensure that all gardens have sufficient volunteer support

Experiment with candidate plants

Create attractive, informative gardens for fairgrounds visitors

Events/Activities:

Committee activities include routine garden maintenance, recruitment of new volunteers, and occasional renovation efforts.

Because of the public nature of the gardens and the frequent events at the Fairgrounds, people discover the gardens. When I have been working there, I often observe people wander through the gardens and read the signage. When invited to, they often ask questions.

How have your goals and events met the educational mission of BCMGA?

All seven gardens now have educational signage defining the target challenge, providing strategies for gardeners to use in their own gardens, and encouraging gardeners to use sustainable, environmentally-supportive practices. Sun-damaged signs for older gardens have been replaced. The signage is colorful, simple to read, and provides links to the BCMGA website with specific information such as planting lists.

All plants within the gardens have permanent identification labels.

Has your committee had opportunities to meet the needs of underserved populations?

The committee organization supports one underserved MG population: those whose work or family commitments restrict their ability to participate in regularly scheduled daytime meetings. Individual gardens are managed by a single person or small team who work in their gardens on whatever schedule suits them best. This may mean small group work sessions or individuals tending the gardens solo.

*Information needed by Treasurer for annual IRS filing

How might your committee extend events/activities to underserved populations in the future?
We had previously thought about having a “Make your own tea” event, including plants of other cultural cuisines such as Tulsi, but that MG no longer participates and the garden has been redirected to a different challenge.

Other information you would like to share that is unique to your committee:
Increased use of the fairgrounds as an RV park has increased foot traffic and is perhaps associated with some recent vandalism issues. Plants sometimes disappear, ripped out of the ground. Beer cans and bottles are found tucked into the beds. Unfortunate.