

## Masters of the gardening universe dedicate time to local garden

Written by Chris Lee

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Planting cucumbers, onions, beans, tomatoes, lettuce, roses or even daisies. If there is a question of how to plant it, there is a group in town who will assist you. Who are you going to call? The Master Gardeners.

Master Gardeners is a group run through the Phillips County Extension Office. Members are available to answer questions about gardening. They also oversee the community garden in town.

Annette Shaw said many people don't know there is a community garden in Holyoke. One priority for the group is to raise awareness about the garden and the services the group offers.

Members of the Master Gardeners donate 50 hours of their time to the community. Whether it is time in the community garden or answering questions for people, they are required to serve their 50 hours to be a part of the group.

Shaw said people aren't aware what the group does or that there is such a group in town. "We want people to be aware that they can also sign up to be Master Gardeners," she said. "We are out there to help people with their gardening all year round."

The group is also capable of looking for problems with dying trees or grass. They can look and determine symptoms and solutions to the problem and even send specimens off for evaluation.

### Community garden in town

The community garden is located between E. Furry and E. Emerson streets and S. Reynolds and S. Coleman avenues. The land was donated by Mary Belle Rafert nearly three years ago. The rules are simple. Put in some time helping with the garden and you may reap the benefits, according to Shaw.

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The garden is run through the Extension Office. Anybody can plant in the garden. Shaw noted if you plant something, you are required to put some time into working in the garden.

The 4-H members work in the garden for part of their community service throughout the year and others are encouraged to spend their community service hours in the garden.

Linda Langelo from the Extension Office orders the seeds for the garden according to Laura Bittner. If someone has their own seeds they are allowed to use those, according to Shaw, Bittner and Barb Neugebauer.

The City of Holyoke donates the water for use in the garden. The group would just like people to know who they are and what they do. Getting involved with the community garden would be a big help to the group. They said the garden is big with many different plants and vegetables.

### **Bulb, money donations sought for library**

This fall, the Master Gardeners will be looking for donations of either money or bulbs from flower beds around town. Their main goal is to help beautify the library flowers and flower beds. Shaw, Bittner and Neugebauer recall people around town taking engagement and wedding photos at the library in years past.

Bittner said 10 years ago her mother had her 80th birthday and they had family photos taken at the library.

Shaw mentioned when people around town dig up their bulbs this fall, they may donate them to the Master Gardeners for use at the library. Time is also another way to donate. Shaw said an hour of some-one's time is always useful.

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For more information about the community garden, Master Gardeners or gardening in general call 854-3616.