

Master Gardeners Receive Award at International Conference

Four University of Delaware New Castle County Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners—Suzanne Baron, Gail Hermenau, Eva Rotmann-Oehler, and Sherie Stiles—attended the *International Master Gardener Conference* in Las Vegas, Nevada, in March. Gail Hermenau gave a brief speech about the four-part, “2008 Keep It Green Workshop Series” that won the group a *2009 International Search for Excellence Award*. Gail was an instructor at the Keep It Green workshop, along with New Castle County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Educator, Carrie Murphy, and Master Gardeners Peg Baseden, Eva Rotmann-Oehler and Suzanne Baron. The KIG workshop, recently repeated in February 2009, included sessions on Healthy Soils, Native Plants, Water Conservation, and Creating a Backyard Habitat.

Judges for the Excellence Award described the KIG workshop as “great,” and “timely,” with good handouts, a creative format, and commended the KIG workshop on its use of environmentally-friendly materials which reinforced the message of the workshop. A poster was also displayed during the week-long conference.

Sherie Stiles represented the Junior Gardener program and its fourteen person team. Their K-4 presentations on environmental and horticultural topics won a second place award in the Search for Excellence Awards in the Youth Division; they also prepared a poster for display and informational purposes. Junior Gardener Programs include a series of presentations designed to complement Delaware State Science Education standards. Included are such diverse topics as Life Cycles of Butterflies, Insect Detectives, Trees in Spring, Give it to the Worms, Taming the Wild Ivy, The Buzz on Bees, the Magic of Soil, and Life Cycle of Plants.

Judges for the Excellence Award described the Junior Gardener Program as providing topics that were “made fun” by titles that grabbed youth attention, tremendous organization, and how the various presentations met Delaware science standards.

This is the first time that a Delaware Master Gardener program, workshop, or activity has been awarded Search for Excellence Awards at the International Master Gardener Conference in the twenty year history of the Master Gardener program in Delaware.