



Master Gardener Volunteers of Cobb County Kemp Junior Master Gardener Project



Project Location: Kemp Elementary School, 865 Corner Road, Powder Springs, GA 30127

Project Workday: Wednesday, 2:30 — 4 p.m.

Project Chair: Electa Keil (770-919-8910)

The Junior Master Gardener program engages children in novel "hands-on" group and individual learning experiences that promote a love of gardening, develop an appreciation for the environment and cultivate the mind. JMG encourages youths to be of service to others through service learning and leadership development

The third, fourth and fifth graders at Kemp Elementary in Powder Springs meet every Wednesday between 2:30 and 4 to work towards their Junior Master Gardener pins. They follow the rigorous national JMG curriculum. Each project is fun as well as educational. A big chart keeps track of their progress. Each child must complete 44 group projects and 44 individual projects as well as three summer workdays to receive the pin, usually in fifth grade.

At least two Master Gardeners are at every session. Training is required to be a certified Teaching Master Gardener but you don't need training to volunteer. Using the Teacher/Leader guide and the JMG student handbook, the volunteers lead students toward their Level One JMG certification goal. Although the handbook covers all-important MG topics, such as insects, diseases and landscaping, it also includes a life skills/career exploration guide and reinforces the existing school curriculum since participants must employ math, science, literature, and teamwork skills in practical situations.

After class work, the group works in the extensive gardens behind the Kemp School. A quick tour outside shows impressive landscaping done by the students, parents and Master Gardeners. Impressive project displays showcase a wheelchair accessible raised-bed garden, as well as flourishing flowers, vines and vegetables. In addition, student-grown watermelons and pumpkins have won several prizes at the annual North Georgia State Fair in Marietta.

Many of the children help in their home gardens with tomatoes and watermelons as their favorite crops. They learn not only how food is grown but also how good homegrown food tastes.

If the weather is inclement, the children participate in indoor gardening activities such as growing broccoli from seed in tiny terrariums made from takeout food containers. They learn to identify the sprouting leaflets and will carefully chart the progress of the plant's growth.

The students are clearly enthusiastic gardeners. They like working with plants while helping the environment. They enjoy going into the garden on Wednesdays and they all like eating the vegetables raised in their school garden.



The mission of the MGVOC is to advance the horticultural education and practices of its members and to promote the knowledge of and interest in gardening to the members and to the public.

For more information contact Carolyn Gentry, Master Gardener Coordinator at the Cobb Extension. Phone: 770-528-4070