

Local master gardeners earn advanced master gardener status from LSU



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Seven master gardeners who live in Pearl River County were recently bestowed advanced master gardener status from the Louisiana State University.

Currently, Mississippi State University does not offer an advanced master gardener program, but one is tentatively being created.

Those local master gardeners who received their advanced master gardener status from LSU are Mary Donahue, Terry Downs, Phyllis Goodwin, Sandra Love-Thompson, Amy Nichols, Bertha Page and Herschel Rector.

Two other master gardeners also completed the necessary requirements, they are John Malanchak who is a Mississippi Master Gardener and president of Mississippi Master Gardeners Association and Cynthia Maldonado is a Louisiana Master Gardener and Past President of Master Gardeners of Greater New Orleans.

Eileen Hollander, a Pearl River County master gardener and Advanced Louisiana Master Gardener, facilitated the collaboration to allow Mississippi master gardeners to take Louisiana's advanced course due to the current lack of a similar program in this state. This was the first time LSU allowed Mississippi residents to take the course.

In order to receive the advanced master gardener status, each candidate was tasked with being a good standing member of a master gardener program, pass an individual pesticide applicator test, complete coursework through LSU and create and present an educational project.

Cynthia Maldonado said she gave a presentation that helped simplify the pesticide license requirement and created a sustainable garden that can assist with water management.

Sandy Love-Thompson's project determined that the fungus that grows on cypress trees ensures they are healthier.

Phyllis Goodwin's project focused on pollinators and how to plant effective pollinator gardens.

Mary Donahue used her project to focus on micro climates, where she wrote an article about naturally occurring micro climates and how to use them to grow non native species. She has a rubber tree that has been on her patio for the past 18 years and she utilizes special lighting and temperature monitors to keep her hibiscus healthy.

Terry Downs used her project to share information about phenology, which is the study of seasonal climates and how they affect plants and animals. Her presentation focused on how phenology affects life forms in South Mississippi.