

Submitter: Rebecca Jay

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5525

I been an Oregon Master Gardener since 2021 and have witnessed how much our group helps. The Polk County Master Gardener program is just one of the tools the Extension Office offers for county residents. There are 4-H groups studying many different subjects, not just animal husbandry. There is help available for small farms, food preservation and preparation, sustainable gardening classes for Master Gardeners and the general public. The Grow Your Own (formally Seed to Supper) benefits from Polk County Master Gardeners' training as well. The availability of these and other classes, tutorials, one-on-one expertise help the people in Polk County to learn better practices for the vast array of jobs and interests in the County. The Master Gardeners man a help desk for gardening questions, maintain a demonstration garden in Independence to illustrate plants and methods practical for the mid-Willametteis Valley. The produce from the demonstration garden is giving to the Ella Curran Food Bank. The PCMG collaborate withe the Independence Library to host a summer enrichment program in Inspiration Garden. Public classes are held for pruning and gardening practices, and the Garden provides a much visited walking area for neighbors and even regular visitors from other towns and cities, as well as visitors to the area. We annually host a seed swap and plant sway for the community in February that is always well attended and appreciated.