

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Lori Mendels

Class of 2015

Gardening

How old were you when you started gardening? I remember helping my father and grandmother gardening way back when I was a little girl. I remember my dad always telling us to plant the potato's in newspaper....so they didn't get dirt in their eyes. We lived out in the country and had a big garden. At the end of each year I would help my grandmother preserve all the produce for us to enjoy over the winter months. After I got married, I always had my own garden not quite the same size, but still large enough to feed my family.

How did you get interested in gardening and what do you like best about it?

I love my vegetable garden, primarily tomatoes and beans. I take after my grandmother's love for canning. I can tomatoes every weekend from mid-August until the end of the season. Everything from spaghetti sauce, salsa, tomato juice, chili, stewed tomatoes, peaches, apple sauce and beans. I also can all the tomatoes from my daughter and son-in-law's garden and have enough to feed four families throughout the year.

What is your method of keeping pests out of your garden? This is a great question as we live in a woods and we have a lot of critters. Everything from deer, turkeys, chipmunks, squirrels, rabbits and birds. We have a six foot fence around my vegetable garden with reinforcing wire on the bottom and sides of the garden. So far nothing has gotten in. I also have a one foot high fence around the flower gardens surrounding the house, mostly to keep the rabbits out. Speaking from experience, there is nothing more disappointing than going out to your garden one morning and all your sunflowers and clematis plants are gone.

What is your favorite master gardener volunteer opportunity? I absolutely loved working with the plant sale committee. They welcomed me in as a student and I learned a lot from them. I was involved my very first year and enjoyed it so much I am now one of the tri-chairs for the 2016 plant sale.

What other gardening project have you worked on that you enjoyed and why? When my husband and I moved into our new home ten years ago, my first flower garden was a hummingbird and butterfly garden. I did a lot of research as to what they loved most and had some good success. We have about three hummingbird feeders in addition to the garden and we see several hummers daily.

Personal

Do you have any hidden talents? Or what would be two things that your peers would say you do extremely well? I don't really consider this is a talent, but I love organizing projects. This year I worked on accumulating everyone's service hours for 2015 and organizing the volunteer list for the 2015 plant sale. I love the challenge of getting the information together, documenting all the information and then presenting it as complete as possible. Hopefully I will be able to do those projects again in 2016.

Tell us about your significant other? Kids? Pets? I am married to my wonderful husband Paul. I have three beautiful children, Jennifer, Stacie and Craig. And seven amazing grandchildren; Megan, Lauren, Katelyn, Grant, Charli, Seth and Quinn. They all keep me very busy - my favorite time is spending time with family.



What do you do in winter instead of gardening? I have a few hobbies I am passionate about besides gardening. I make several fleece blankets a year for friends and family. My sister and I also donate several blankets a year to the local homeless and battered women's shelters. I also love to do paper crafting. I try to make all my own birthday, wedding, anniversary, sympathy cards as much as possible.

General

What do you like to do in your free time- besides gardening? Since moving into a woods, my husband and I love watching and feeding the birds. We keep a book and mark each new bird we see that comes to our feeders and the time of year they come and leave. Since we moved here we have recorded about 47 different birds. My husband has about six bird feeders that he tops off every day....rain, snow or shine. We like to consider them our pets, and best of all, they always keep the mess outside.