

# Experiencing Gardening Through the 5 Senses

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Signage helps passive visitors learn about how to experience the Sensory Garden.

## SITUATION AND NEED

Paulding County is one of the fastest-growing counties in the nation with a current population of 180,000 estimated to grow to 230,000 by the year 2030. Most residents live in suburban settings and are disconnected from agricultural production, though there are farms situated on the west side of the county. Consequently, youth in Paulding have few opportunities to engage with horticulture or agriculture. Many have no experience with growing their own gardens, despite research that gardening with youth provides STEM learning and beyond. Notably, it enhances areas of childhood development, such as motor skills, confidence, patience, physical activity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Butcher and Pletcher, 2017, Phelps et. Al., 2010). The county had no public space dedicated to a children's garden. Paulding County Extension recognized the need for gardening education that was truly hands-on and centered on helping children experience gardening in a meaningful setting.



Master Gardener Extension Volunteers hosted "Storytime in the Garden" for pre-K audiences

## RESPONSE

The ANR Agent and Program Assistant teamed up with Master Gardener Extension Volunteer (MGEV) Trainees, and local supporters to construct the first-of-its-kind Children's Sensory Garden specializing in teaching and engaging the five senses. The ANR Program Assistant initiated a Junior Master Gardener (JMG) Program by recruiting 15 children in grades 2 through 5 to participate in monthly hands-on learning in the garden from March through November of 2022 and 2023. MGEVs initiated a Children's Storytime that was hosted monthly during summer in the garden for Pre-K to 1st graders. Additionally, MGEV Interns created a 5 Senses lesson plan that was presented as part of Youth Science Day in the Garden.



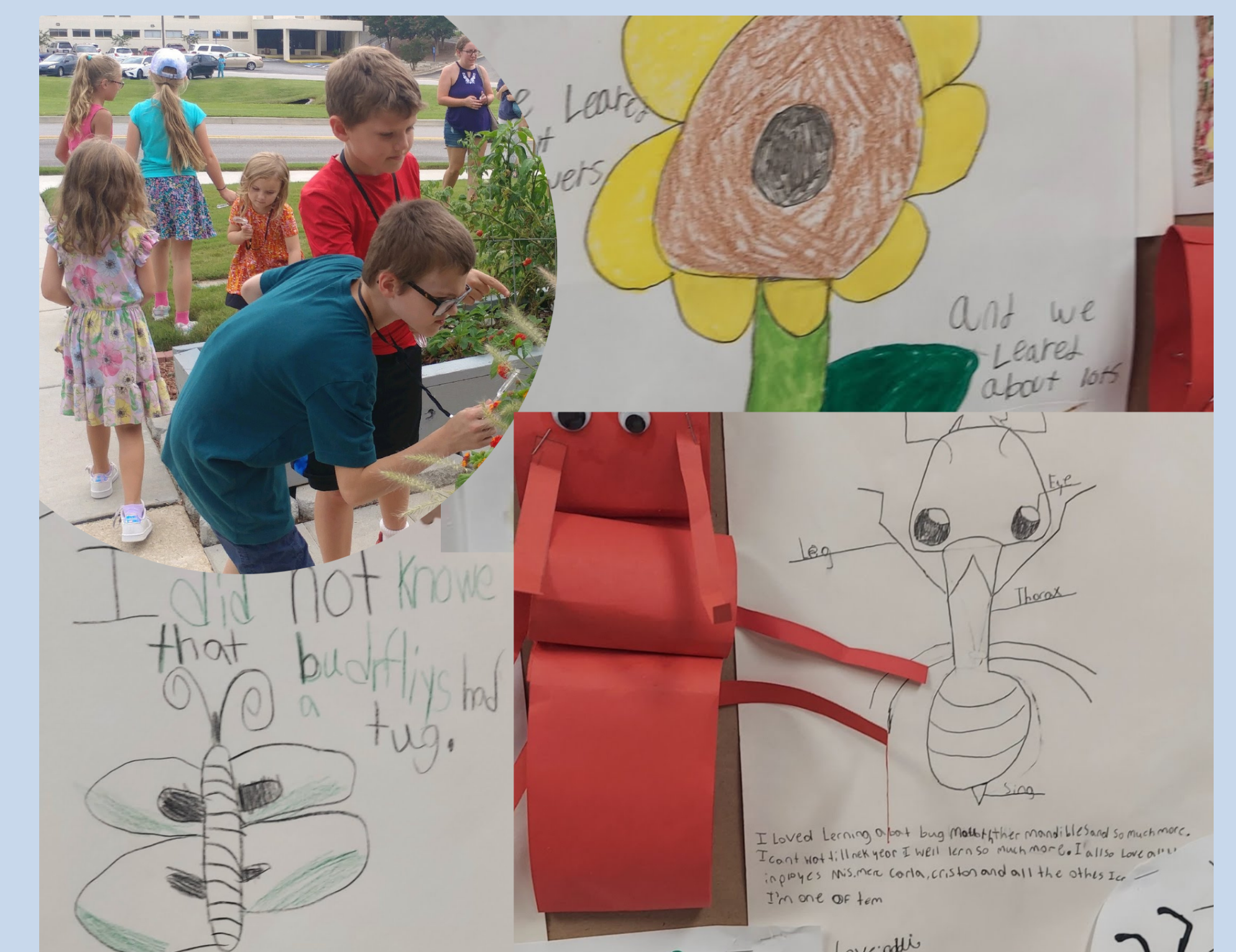
The garden appeals to even the youngest visitors with movement and games on a passive visit.



The garden allows us to host youth audiences for the Great Southeast Pollinator Census.

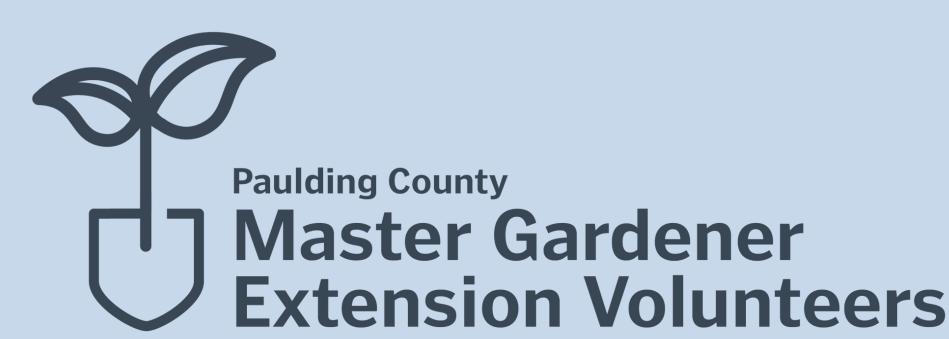


Junior Master Gardeners experience taste through the sensory garden.



Junior Master Gardener participants learned about insects and did an insect scavenger hunt in the sensory garden.

## COLLABORATORS



## IMPACT



377 Youth and Adults visited Garden during 28 programs



15 Volunteers have contributed 510 Hours of Volunteer Service-Value of \$14,606



\$4500 in Grant Funding and in-kind donations totalling \$1000

## REFERENCES

Butcher, K and Pletcher, J. (2017). Gardening with Young Children helps their development. Michigan State University Extension, [https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/gardening\\_with\\_young\\_children\\_helps\\_their\\_development](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/gardening_with_young_children_helps_their_development)  
Phelps, J., Hermann, J. R., Parker, S. R., & Denney, B. (2010). Advantages of Gardening as a Form of Physical Activity in an After-School Program. The Journal of Extension, 48(6), Article 20. <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/joe/vol48/iss6/20>



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