

SAMPLE Nomination

Nomination for the Golden Trowel Award:

Date: January 5, 2007

Name of Individual Nominated: Hank J. Handy

Affiliation: WVU Extension Agent, Bloom County, West Virginia

Address: 400 East Lavender Lane, Bloomdale, West Virginia

Phone Number: (O) 304-770-000, Ext 002; (H) 304-770-1111

Name of Person Submitting Nomination: James Feather, Vice-President, Bloom Co. Master Gardeners

Phone Number: 304-700-3333 (W) **Email address :** litefeather@ioc.net

Group you are representing in making this nomination: Bloom County Master Gardener Association

Nature of Contribution:

Hank Handy attended Ohio University majoring in horticulture. After graduating from the university in 1986, he obtained a job as an extension agent in Washington County, Ohio. In June, 1998 he relocated from Marion, Ohio accepting an extension agent position in Bloom County. While working in Ohio, he was active with the Master Gardener Program, and upon learning that Bloom County did not have a Master Gardener he quickly began to plan to implement a program within our county. In 1998, there were only two counties in West Virginia with active Master Gardener Programs. While Bloom County is one of the largest counties in West Virginia and a county whose primary industry is mining, few people gardened. There are no major cities in the county, but there are several small communities with populations of 1,000-2,000 people. The mean family income in the county is \$24,000/year. Mr. Hank saw a need to teach people to grow gardens that would provide fresh vegetables and improve the general nutrition of its citizens. Using his past experience he put the course together, networked to find experts to come in and teach, and marketed the program in the community. The first class started in January, 1999. There were 12 participants. I was among that twelve. I had never gardened, no had anyone in my family. After the class, I was so excited and in May I planted my first garden, along with others from the class. When we were planting, Hank was there to help us, make suggestions, and reinforce the teaching.

However, Harry still wasn't satisfied. He realized that the class had been small, because many could not afford the \$40 fee to take the class. The next year, he worked with Lowes and got a small grant of \$500. that was used to provide scholarships to 12 individuals who expressed interest in the program but lacked the money for the course fee. The 2000 class had 30 participants, and the number taking the course has steadily increased each year. In the year 2000, Harry encouraged us to form a local Master Gardener Association, modeled after others in the state. When we organized we had 15 members. Harry served as our advisors, and helped to schedule speakers to help us meet our educational needs. He nudged us to get involved in our community. This past year, Hank helped us to apply for a "Healthy Thumbs" grant. The money from this grant was used for raised beds at a local long term care facility. This was great fun, and we planted vegetables with the residents of the facility. They have been able to grow enough tomatoes, cukes, peppers, lettuce to supply the home during the summer.

As an extension agent, Hank Handy wears many hats- he assists the farmers in the area of animal husbandry, works with the County Beekeepers Association, and promotes 4-H within the county. He has served as a camp counselor, and teacher for the county's annual 4-H camp for the past 4 years. During his first visit to Camp HOWNOW he noticed there was a lot of brush, and dead debris laying on paths,

and that the shrubbery and trees at the camp were badly in pruning. That spring, he enlisted the support of two 4 H clubs to work at the camp- removing dead limbs, brush, pruning trees and shrubs. When summer arrived

many people commented on how good the grounds looked. That fall, the same 4-H groups, with Hank returned to plant the banks along the road entering the camp with daffodils. How beautiful it was in the spring.

Since coming to Bloom County, Mr. Handy's passion for horticulture and teaching people how to garden has become contagious. We are now helping to teach classes at schools, and offer garden clinics in the early spring. Almost every household in Bloomdale has a small garden on their lot.

This year, Hank Handy, has obtained permission from the County Commission to use one of the shelters at a local city park for a weekly Farmers Market. He guided two Master Gardeners from the last class as they developed a marketing plan to promote the Market. Come July, we are hoping that this market will provide another source of good wholesome vegetables for citizens of our county and provide another way to promote the master gardener program in the county.

Outcome Measures:

Without Mr. Handy's work, I believe Bloom County would not have a master gardener program, and that our 4-H'ers would not be learning about gardening, the maintenance of trees and shrubs, and care of the environment.

Promotion of WVU Extension Service's Master Gardener Program

Within Bloom County, Hank is know as "Mr. Master Gardener". Our program has a good reputation in community service. Mr. Handy has spoke to civic groups, women's clubs, and local government informing them as to how horticulture and gardening can improve the lives of our citizens. This year, he, received the "Citizen of the Year" award from the Bloomdale Chamber of Commerce.

In addition, Mr. Handy is presently serving as an advisor to Johnson County as they begin to plan to implement a Master Gardener program in that county.

It is with pleasure that I nominate Hank Handy for the WV Master Gardener Association's Golden Trowel Award.

James Feather

Bloom County Master Gardener

Attachments:

**Letter of Support from Bloom County Master Gardener
Letter of Support from Bloom County Extension Agent**

SAMPLE Letter of Support #1

Letter of Support

Nomination for the Golden Trowel Award:

Date: January 8, 2007

Name of Individual Nominated: Hank J. Handy

Affiliation: WVU Extension Agent, Bloom County, West Virginia

Name of Person Submitting Letter of Support: Judy T. Jones, Chr. Of Volunteer Activities Committee, Bloom Co. Master Gardeners

Phone Number: 304-700-5000 (W) **Email address :** JTJones@yahoo.com

I have known and worked with Hank Handy for the past 4 years. With every class and for every project that our master gardener group has done, Harry has been present and always offers encouragement and help when we struggled with things we had never done before. This year I am co-chairing the Farmers' Market project. To help me visualize how we would do this, he took one of his day off and together we visited 2 other county farmers markets. Hank is known to help with projects on Saturdays, and volunteers his time for a number of other community activities- coaching little league basketball, serving on the school board. In a very short time he has really been a contributing member of our community.

I have read the narrative prepared by Jim Feathers and it describes Hank's involvement in our community accurately. He is most deserving of the Golden Trowel Award.

Judy T. Jones

Bloom County Master Gardener

SAMPLE Letter of Support #2

**West Virginia University Extension Service
AG-Science Building, Room 2200
100 Agriculture Hill
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV**

January 8, 2007

To: Awards Committee, WVMGA

From: Curly Curtis, WVU Extension Service, State Master Gardener Program Coordinator

Re: Nomination of Hank Handy, Extension Agent, Bloom County for the Golden Trowel Award

In the brief time that Hank Handy has been the Extension Agent for Bloom County he has done a great job. He has enhanced the image of Extension Service staff from those who works with 4-H and farmers, to people who can make substantial contributions to the community at large. In visiting Bloomdale, I have seen the evidence of a viable master gardener program. When ask about the program, most citizens can tell me something positive they have done within the community. On one occasion I talked with a parent of a Bloomdale 4-Her who told me she was reluctant to send her daughter to camp, because of the rough, overgrown, neglected County 4-H Camp. She shared that one year her daughter came home with poison ivy, she got while sitting on the porch railing of one cottage. She was so impressed with all the work that Hank and the 4 H'ers had done to clean up the area, and make it more beautiful.

As the state coordinator for the Master Gardener program, I have heard positive remarks about Hank's willingness to teach classes in other county programs. He does this voluntarily, on his own time, and has never requested reimbursement for milage or meals.

He is highly respected by the master gardeners in his county. His Master Gardener class continues to have increasing enrollment, and greater than 60% of those taking the class have joined the Bloom County Master Gardener Association.

I certainly support his nomination as the recipient of the Golden Trowel Award.

Curly Curtis

FINAL TIPS

Remain aware of deadlines for nominations. The official deadline for these nominations is 3 months before the Annual Conference. So get them mailed to the Awards Committee chairman no later than the first week in February when the conference is in the spring.

Mail the nomination and 2 letter of support together as a packet.