

# WANTED: Green Thumbs Who Grow Gardens And Cultivate Communities

## Cash Rewards For Gardeners Who Help Others, Beautify Neighborhoods

(NAPSA)—According to the National Gardening Association, 83 percent of U.S. households participated in lawn and garden activities last year. For some, gardening is more than just a hobby—it's a way to make a difference. With green thumbs and elbow grease, volunteers across the nation are growing food to feed the hungry, revitalizing crime-ridden areas, teaching children environmental stewardship and beautifying neighborhoods.

To reward them, The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company is seeking nominees for its seventh annual Scotts Give Back to Grow Awards, which will offer a total of \$40,000 to the winners—\$5,000 each to four first-place category winners and \$2,500 to two additional finalists in each category.

“Gardens can transform communities, and the seeds of these transformations are often planted by volunteers,” says Jim Hagedorn, chairman and CEO of ScottsMiracle-Gro. “The Awards recognize selfless heroes for their efforts to grow a better world.”

Nominations are being accepted for these categories:

• **Classroom Gardener of the Year**—Salutes elementary through high school teachers who incorporate gardening into their curriculums.

• **Urban Greenup Gardener of the Year**—Salutes volunteers who use gardening to address the challenges of an inner-city neighborhood.

• **Community Beautification Gardener of the Year**—Salutes volunteers who demonstrate their commitment to environmental



stewardship through beautification of a main street, park or neighborhood within their city limits.

• **Good Neighbor Gardener of the Year**—Salutes volunteers who help feed the hungry by growing produce for donation to food banks or participating in programs such as Plant a Row for the Hungry.

The winners of the sixth annual Awards included a middle school teacher whose students learned important life skills in their classroom garden; a community member who spearheaded the restoration of an abandoned, formerly segregated park; a generous gardener who led the donation of more than 16,000 pounds of fresh produce to the hungry; and a volunteer who established a program that improves quality of inner-city life through year-round organic food production.

Nomination forms for the seventh annual Awards can be found at [www.scotts.com/gbtg](http://www.scotts.com/gbtg) or by calling (866) 565-3554. Deadline for entry is Dec. 1, 2006. Winners and finalists will be announced on or before Feb. 9, 2007.

### Gardening Tips For Beginners

Whether you're looking to start a community garden or plant a garden of your own, here are some tips from ScottsMiracle-Gro that will help you get started with gardening practices that are friendly to your plants—and to the environment.

- Use natural water resources wisely. Use rainfall as the garden's principle water source. Watch for signs of lack of water, such as dry soil or slight wilting, before watering. Only water during the cool times of the day.
- Water deeply, and less often. Light daily watering encourages the development of a shallow root system. Less-frequent deep watering encourages plants to grow deep roots that better withstand pests and periods of drought.
- Protect the soil with mulch. Use mulch around and in gardens to conserve soil moisture, prevent weeds and moderate soil temperatures.
- Always read the label. Use garden products correctly by following the label instructions. Overapplication will not improve product performance and can harm plants and the environment. Never dump leftover product into the storm sewer or down the drain.
- Bring nature home. For versatile, portable gardens in homes and apartments, grow plants such as annual flowers and foliage in containers. Choose plants that best fit the growing conditions where the pots will be placed, use a potting soil, and care for the plants with mulch, fertilizer and water.

For more gardening tips or to learn more about the Scotts Give Back to Grow Awards, visit [www.scotts.com/gbtg](http://www.scotts.com/gbtg).

