



Daniel G. Poast

Ohio Outstanding Master Gardener Volunteer, 2009

Regional Outstanding Master Gardener Volunteer, 2009

By David Fong, *Piqua Daily Call*, Monday, November 23, 2009

Dan Poast didn't get into gardening to earn any awards or accolades.

"I've always enjoyed gardening – my parents were gardeners," the Covington resident said. "I've been gardening all my life. But since I became semi-retired, I've be kind of kicked it up a notch. I like being outside. I like the creativity. I like doing something that lasts. That's especially important in the work I do at the (Forrest Hill) Cemetery (in Piqua).

"I want my great-grandchildren to be able to walk through the cemetery some day and see the trees I've planted. It's nice to see things grow on their own. Once you plant them, they take off. Every month, things are different. To see the changes month in and month out is really uplifting. It makes you feel better no matter how bad you are feeling."

While it was a love of gardening – and not the attention it could possibly bring – that has sustained Poast over the decades, he recently was named the Ohio Outstanding Master Gardener Volunteer for 2009. He also was the regional award winner.

"I had no idea I was even nominated," said Poast, who was nominated by the Miami County Master Gardeners Association of which he is a member, "One of the Miami County members told me, "That's what happened when you show up late to a meeting."

Poast didn't find out he had been nominated until he recently attended the Ohio Masters Gardening state conference.

"I pretty much go every year," Poast said. "I enjoy talking to all the other gardeners. I enjoy all the programs and all the speakers. I was amazed when they called the names of everyone who had been nominated. The state is divided into three regions and they announced all the regional winners. When I won, I thought, 'That's really something.' The next award they announced was the outstanding volunteer for the whole state. 'That was pretty amazing.'"

A gardener all his life, Poast's passion really took off 10 years ago when he – at the urging of his wife Linda – began taking Master Gardener classes through The Ohio State University Extension program. While Poast's recent honors were based mostly on his work the past year, it's as much a "lifetime achievement" award for his past decade as a Master Gardener.

"It's really based on what you did the year before, but it's been sort of a 10-year toad for me," Poast said.

Poast has spent countless hours doing volunteer gardening for; the Riverside School brick donation garden, Health Partners Clinic new building, the Miami County Fair entrance and Horticulture building, The Troy-Miami County Library, The Christian School Children's garden, Habitat for Humanity and many individual homes.

Poast said he spends "around 20 to 30 hours per week" gardening in addition to his work as a horticulturist for Forest Hill Cemetery. He said he doesn't plan on giving up gardening anytime soon – and encourages anyone with an interest to explore the Master Gardening program.

"It really is an outstanding program," he said.