The Situation
Junior Master Gardener™ (JMG) is a program for youth of all ages that uses fun activities to teach horticulture and environmental science concepts. There are currently six (6) ongoing JMG clubs in Idaho. In eleven counties, over 12,000 youth and 500 adults have been involved in the Idaho Junior Master Gardener program since its inception. Ninety-five (95) adults and two teens have completed the JMG facilitator certification program.

Requests for JMG awareness, workshop, and/or certification programs have been facilitated in all regions of the state. JMG uses the Experiential Learning Model and meets Idaho State Achievement Standards. The JMG program is currently being used in Solid Waste Education, Botanical Gardens, Boys and Girls Club, Library, Home School, School Enrichment, after school and 4-H club programs across Idaho.

Our Response
Payette County is an agriculture community. We have an active Master Gardener program which serves the community by answering gardening questions and doing other service projects. The Master Gardener and Junior Master Gardener programs help us to feature agriculture as an important resource to our citizens.

Payette County Extension is a pioneer JMG program in Idaho. It chartered the first JMG club in the state. We hosted a certification program in 2002, where six teachers and Master Gardeners were certified, and JMG workshops in 2003 and 2004. We have also partnered with UI District II Extension and the Idaho Botanical Garden in conducting the JMG certification program in Boise from 2002-2006. Payette County Extension has taken JMG into Payette and Washington County after school programs. We’ve hosted JMG spring and summer day camps, set up JMG displays at the Payette County Fair, and introduced JMG to homeschool groups in Payette and Gem counties.

Through the benefit of having a VISTA Volunteer at the UI Payette County Extension Office, day camps were offered to sixteen youth ages five to twelve in June 2005. The focus was metamorphosis. Youth learned about the local butterflies sited in Payette County. Participants saw printouts of each of the 44 caterpillars that reside in the county. Butterfly printouts consisted of a colored picture of the
butterfly, wing span, identification markings, life history, flight patterns, where they lay their eggs, what they eat, and where they live. Children learned about eggs, larvae, and/or the chrysalis. Information came from the teacher/leader resources of Wildlife Gardener at [www.jmgkids.com](http://www.jmgkids.com). Three different stations were set up to let the youth experience a variety of activities. Older youth gained leadership skills while helping younger partners with the activities.

Activities included Building a Beetle or Grasshopper, Find My Shadow, Active Antennae, Who Are We?, Insect Terms Word Search and other wildlife gardener activities. At the close of the day camp detailed instructions were given to each youth pertaining to how long metamorphosis takes, what to expect during each stage, and how to feed their butterflies after they emerge.

The excitement soared as each youth realized that within a two week period they would watch their caterpillars make cocoons and then emerge as a beautiful Painted Lady butterfly. Reports from the youth flooded in during the following weeks as the youth closed this project by releasing their butterflies so the process could start all over again. Donors to our program include Fruitland Nursery and the Kiwanis.

**Program Outcomes**

- The Americorp VISTA Volunteer has implemented after school programs in Payette County and used 3 JMG curriculums.
- From 2002-06 JMG life skills, knowledge, and awareness reached over 200 youth and six teachers through School Enrichment programs.
- From 2002-06 JMG taught science skills to 635 youth, K-5, and seven adults at two sites in the Payette after school program.
- In 2004 and 2005 over 70 Home School youth and their parents learned how to use kits and key insects as beneficial insects or garden pests.
- From 2002-05, 14 JMG Day Camps were offered to the public including 4-H club youth at the Payette County Extension Office. Over 223 youth and five adults were reached. Eight Payette County 4-H teen leaders completed service learning and leadership requirements by implementing these workshops.
- Eight volunteers from Payette County have completed JMG Facilitators Certification in Payette and Boise.
- Three Payette Master Gardeners have helped with JMG day camps.

Because of JMG efforts youth report they now understand “food doesn’t come from the grocery store,” “a garden doesn’t just have vegetables, you can also grow herbs,” and “flour comes from ground wheat not the shelf in the grocery store.” Adults learned that teaching gardening to youth is fun and easy using the JMG curriculum. They also stated “it is a very rewarding experience for both the child and the adult.”

**The Future**

As a result of this program we are expanding our JMG teachings into the Fruitland schools in the fall of 2005-06. Other activities and projects are also planned. The Master Gardeners are working with the Middle School Youth to develop a greenhouse. We are partnering with 21st Century Grant in Payette and starting a new after school program in Fruitland. New partnerships will be developed as 4-H members, Master Gardeners, Juvenile Justice, Payette County Fair and the Payette County Extension Office develop JMG programs in the future.

**For More Information**

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