

## **A Resource for Gardeners - April 1, 1999**

by Victoria Reinhardt

Spring is in the air! The first wave of songbirds is back and the sun is up when the alarm goes off in the morning. It's time to start thinking about our gardens. So I figured this would be the perfect time to talk about the University of Minnesota Extension/Ramsey County Master Gardener program. The Master Gardeners mission is to share information with people to enhance the quality of life and the environment. I want to take this opportunity to tell you about some of the services provided by the Master Gardeners.

For those of you that have access to the Internet, you can have your horticultural questions answered online on the Pioneer Planet website at [www.pioneerplanet.com](http://www.pioneerplanet.com). Last year was the first for this program and it went well. Anyone can browse the questions and answers. Whether you are looking for solutions to specific problems or just browsing for new ideas, this service offers a great opportunity to access valuable information.

If you don't have access to the web, you can still get answers at home by using the Hort-Line. As you can tell from the name it is a hot line for horticultural questions. The phone number is (651) 704-2070. Last year over 2000 people got their questions answered using this service. It is a call back service, where you call in and leave your question and someone will look into it and call you back with an answer.

For those of you wanting to talk to someone in person, there are several options. One option is to stop by the Master Gardener booth at a Farmers Market. Volunteers staff booths, at the Downtown St. Paul, Har Mar, and Aldrich Markets. They answer questions, hand out research literature and assist with problem diagnoses. Also, you can usually find a Master Gardener at the Ramsey County compost sites when you stop by to pick up free compost for your garden. In 1998 over 2000 people used this service. There are also diagnostic clinics. You can bring plant and insect samples to the clinics to be examined by an expert. For clinic times and locations you can call (651) 704-2061. Finally, there is a speakers bureau if you are interested in having someone address a group on horticultural issues.

So, enjoy the outdoors this season and let the Master Gardeners help. The Master Gardeners is a great resource to make gardening more fun and enjoyable for everyone.