



Force of Nature

MATC Update

written by Logan Nelson in cooperation with Theresa Williams

The Horticulture Club at Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) has about sixty active members. However, once a member, always a lifetime member, bringing total membership to over 250 members. The officers for 2006 are Andrew Prociuk, President, David Markle, Treasurer/Vice-President, Theresa Williams, Sales Coordinator/Secretary, Matthew Gebert, Newsletter Editor, and Michael Wendt, Advisor. Their mission is to serve students through educational experiences through trips, speakers, seminars, conferences, and hands-on experience

Theresa Williams explains: "Our organization yearly participates in TCIA, the Mid-American Trade Show, monthly WLCA meetings, the WAA conferences, the Perennial Plant Conference, and PLANET (formerly ALCA) Student Career Days (SCD). MATC was one of the first schools to ever participate in the PLANET in 1976 and we have not missed a year yet. We have also won the SCD Tech Award three years in a row. To do this our students attend workshops or seminars at the career days and whichever school has the most percentage of students participate in at least three, takes first place. This year we have 17 students attending in Provo, Utah. We also have plant sales for all four MATC campuses. In December we sell poinsettias, in February we sell mums and assorted bulbs, in April we sell Easter lilies, and in May we sell annuals, perennials, herbs, vegetables, and hanging baskets. We also have campus clean-up days once a semester to help keep invasive weeds and species out, giving the students some hands-on experi-

ences and beautifying our campus as well. We also have an annual Arbor Day celebration. At this time, the current year's Alice in Dairyland comes and we plant a tree with the children from the campus daycare and then we plant a donated tree in our Alice gardens. This has been an MATC tradition since 1978."

They also take trips to numerous botanical gardens: Green Bay Botanical Gardens in early December to see the amazing winter interest enhanced with thousands of lights, the Chicago Botanical Gardens in the fall, and this spring they are going to Olbrich Botanical Gardens to see the spring bulbs in bloom. They attend classes at Boerner Botanical Gardens and take special tree and herbaceous plant walks there as well.

They hold monthly meetings that are used as educational tools. For every meeting they invite speakers from all aspects of the industry. For example, last semester, a speaker presented chainsaw breakdown and maintenance. They also had another speaker who informed them about starting and owning their own businesses.

There will be approximately 25 students in the Horticulture Club graduating this year, encompassing a variety of job interests. For instance, the officers, Andrew, David, and Matthew, are all interested in landscape design and construction. Whereas, Theresa is leaning toward the arboriculture and nursery aspect of the green industry.

If you are interested in speaking at an MATC Horticulture Club meeting or have any questions about the program that encompasses garden center/greenhouse production, maintenance/arboriculture, and design/building, please contact any of the officers listed above or Student Advisor Mike Wendt at MATC.