

# Next generation of gardeners honoured



Luke Hendry

More from Luke Hendry (<https://www.intelligencer.ca/author/lhendry>)

Published on: October 8, 2018 | Last Updated: October 8, 2018 1:41 PM EDT



Kaden Koutroulides, centre, of Demorestville holds the Prince Edward County Master Gardeners' Children's Gardening trophy Saturday, October 6, 2018 at the County of Prince Edward Library and Archives in Picton, Ont. Kaden placed first; Evan Graham, right, of Consecon was second, while Marinda de Villiers, left, was third. Luke Hendry/Belleville Intelligencer/Postmedia Network

PICTON — The Prince Edward County Master Gardeners' newest crop – young talent – is thriving.

Last spring, the group challenged children ages eight to 12 to plant, tend and document the progress of their own gardens. Kids accepted the challenge and on Saturday, the masters announced the contest winners in a brief gathering at the County of Prince Edward Library and Archives.

Kaden Koutroulides, 10, of Demorestville won the first children's garden award, which came with a \$100 cash prize. "It feels good," Kaden said, adding he started his own garden "to put food on the table."

He said he grew tomatoes, cucumber, kale and much more.

When you grow it yourself, he added, "The food's more fresh."

Consecon's Evan Graham, 8, placed second. He spent the summer growing cucumbers, parsley, cilantro, beans and other veggies.

"They tasted really good," he said.

Picton's Marinda De Villiers, 11, was third.

"She just did her own thing," said her father, Peet. Apart from asking her mother's advice now and then, he said, Marinda "was very independent."

The eldest master gardener, Joyce Young, 90, presented the honours.

Master gardener Barbra Stock, who with fellow members Ren Duinker and Susan Warrack organized the contest, declined to say how many children competed but said all received certificates.

The women conceived the idea of a contest while having tea.

Children had to garden by themselves and keep a journal throughout the season.

"For this age group in this electronic age, this is quite a long-term thing," Stock said.

"We hoped it would have a ripple effect – and it has," she said, noting

one grower also competed in the Milford Fair.

Peet de Villiers said his daughter, Marinda, "journalled very diligently. "I think she really enjoyed it," he said.

"She would come up and tell me, 'Come look at my garden.'

"She was really proud of what she did, which was awesome."

Organizers didn't seek donations but several donors did offer cash for prizes as well as other support, Stock said.

She added the contest was also intended to promote the group. It has 18 members and isn't limited to Prince Edward County residents.

But to become a certified master gardener, a person must first take a two-year university course at a cost of about \$1,500, said Stock.

“We pay for half of that.”

In return, members must contribute 30 hours of volunteer work per year to aid group activities. There’s a plant sale, public talks and website. A course for senior citizens is being planned.

Stock said membership requires commitment. “It isn’t for everyone.

“You have to keep your gardening education going,” she said.

Members also welcome public questions; they can be submitted via the website at [pecmastergardeners.com](http://pecmastergardeners.com). Replies may take a few days to arrive.

Stock said more members are welcome. Contact the group via the website to learn more.