



National Award for Dow Gardens

The Growin' Gardeners program of Dow Gardens, in Midland, has been selected to receive the Jane L. Taylor Award by the American Horticulture Society (AHS).



The national award is given annually to *"an individual, organization or program that has inspired and nurtured future horticulturists through efforts in children's and youth gardening"* will be presented June 10th in Alexandria, Virginia. The Taylor award is one of twelve awards given annually by the AHS recognizing different disciplines of horticulture.

Growin' Gardeners, under the leadership of Melissa Butkiewicz, Dow gardens Children's Garden Horticulturist, is a hands-on, interactive program that involves children and their families in gardening. Through the program, families are assigned a four foot by four foot plot in raised beds which surround the Children's Garden. They then choose the vegetables, herbs and flowers they wish to grow in "their" garden. The families receive weekly lessons and a workbook which teach garden basics and use that knowledge to tend their garden from planting through harvest. *"Nothing quite matches the glow of a child when they show off their first vegetables of the season"* said Butkiewicz, a 2003 Graduate of Michigan State University with a degree in Horticulture.

Growin Gardeners began in 2003 with ten plots and twenty three participants and grew modestly in each year. In 2008, under Butkiewicz's leadership, the program expanded to eighty-four plots and now involves some 250 participants. *"It is gratifying to see this program receive national recognition"* said Dow Gardens Managing Director, Marty McGuire, *"Melissa and the rest of the staff take great pride in teaching the principles of horticulture. The award is truly a testament to the good things going on at Dow Gardens"*.

While the Growin' Gardeners program is full for the 2010 season, the Children's Garden remains open from 9:00 am to 8:30 PM throughout the summer and offers a host of learning and play opportunities. Program notes are available at www.dowgardens.org.