For over nine years, Kathy Warner has served as a Nassau Extension Master Gardener volunteer. Recently, she was named the 2014 Nassau County Volunteer of the Year. She has been an invaluable asset to Extension from day 1, not only to the Horticulture program, but across all Extension program areas (4-H, Agriculture/Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Services, Horticulture).

Nominated by Rebecca I. Jordi, County Extension Director/Horticulture Agent, Kathy Warner’s contributions were categorized as invaluable. In support of the Extension’s Horticulture service area, her volunteer service includes: graphics and collateral development; editor and author of Horticulture News, the e-newsletter; photography application design; PowerPoint presentation design. Additionally, Warner is a major contributor to all Horticulture media efforts, as well as grant applications and award recognition programs on the state, regional and national levels.

As the technology specialist for the County Extension website, Ms. Warner redesigned, updates, and maintains the UF/IFAS Nassau County website. Kathy Warner’s mission is to provide an effective web-based communications tool for UF/IFAS Nassau County Extension Service in all program areas.

Averaging nearly 300 volunteer hours annually, Kathy has provided a tracking tool for analysis of the website’s usage. A “search hits counter” was embedded in the website program to track the number of search hits to the UF/IFAS Nassau County website. Another evaluation component is the number of pages on the website. Original search hits to the UF/IFAS Nassau County website was 610 annually with only about 8 pages. Today, over 300 pages of content has created an “encyclopedia” of information about the UF/IFAS Nassau County Demonstration Garden. Website hits soared, and is now, growing to over 113,000 annually.

In support of community homeowners, the website is an educational support tool and outreach vehicle for all three UF/IFAS Nassau County Demonstration Gardens: the main Demonstration Garden and the Palm Garden at the James S. Page Governmental Complex; and the Fruit Demonstration Garden at the Yulee Extension office. All gardens receive public exposure on a daily basis providing passive education to observers. Signs with scientific and botanical names are provided. Additionally, a “pocket garden” is located at the Fernandina Beach Historic Courthouse, in a gated parking area.

Ms. Jordi stated, “Based on the volume of hits to our website, it is safe to deduce that under Kathy Warner’s leadership, the website has also positively affected the productivity of the CED-Horticulture Extension Agent and Master Gardener volunteers, since many of the hits on our website have been phone calls seeking this information. Kathy is technically smart and very creative; and her advice and counsel are critical to our mission to provide “Solutions for Your Life” to Nassau County’s citizens: residential and commercial, youth and adults.”

Kathy’s wonderful smile, her servant attitude and her special dishes she brings to Master Gardener meetings, are appreciated by Ms. Jordi and Kathy’s Master Gardener volunteer colleagues. Quite appropriately, the plaque Warner received commemorating her selection as the 2014 Nassau County Volunteer of the Year, read: “The dedication you have demonstrated and the commitment you have made to improve the quality of life for your fellow citizens reflect great credit upon you and all Nassau County residents. We sincerely thank you for all that you do!”