



## ***BRAZORIA COUNTY ENABLING GARDEN***

**By Mary Ruthe Miller**

The Brazoria County Enabling Garden is a unique facility located at the Brazoria Environmental Education Station (BEES) in Angleton. The Enabling Garden demonstrates gardening as part of an active lifestyle and is a place where people of all ages and abilities can participate in gardening. When properly designed, an Enabling Garden eliminates any physical barrier to gardening.

Work to create this garden began as early as 2010 and was completed last year thanks to financial support and grants from Multiple Sclerosis-Lone Star Chapter, Dow Chemical and Kroger Company. Valuable support and consultation was also provided by managers with the holistic Garden at Texas A&M University.

The project began with the construction of 19 raised beds of various heights and shapes. While the facility originally complied with the ADA specifications, accessibility proved to be difficult and unsafe.

In 2016, the entire area was paved with concrete and sidewalks were installed from the parking area to the gardening area. Safety fencing was installed around the perimeter of the gardens, and special tools designed for people with disabilities were purchased. In addition to these improvements, automatic drip irrigation was installed so that gardening projects would have a better chance of providing successful results. Finally a gazebo was built to provide a place for gardeners to take a break from sun or rain.



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With the exception of pouring concrete surfaces, all construction was done by Master Gardener volunteers. This work included building raised beds, building the safety fencing, building the gazebo, installing the automatic drip irrigation system and painting.

The Brazoria Master Gardeners have been working closely with a privately-owned assisted living facility. This facility brings their residents to our site where gardening projects, including both planting and harvesting, take place. We would like to expand use of this unique facility to other adults and to school age children that would gain therapeutic benefits that gardening can bring.

***The Brazoria County Master Gardeners welcome visitors. To find out more about the Enabling Garden, Brazoria County Master Gardeners Association, and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - Brazoria County programs, contact the Brazoria County AgriLife Extension at 979-864-1558.***

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