



Mary Ellen Connelly

Director since 2011

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Director Connelly holds a degree in Microbiology from Colorado State University (1967). She has worked in the microbiology lab at McKennan Hospital (Avera). Mary Ellen founded the Perennial Passion nursery in Sioux Falls, which she owned and operated from the late 1980s until 1995, when she retired.

Mary Ellen has served as water chair for the League of Women voters and has also served on the Sioux Falls Water Board. She recently served on the Sioux Falls Planning Department's 2010 Landscape Ordinance Study Group, and is currently a member of the 2011 Sustainability Team.

Mary Ellen has been a Master Gardener for over 25 years, South Dakota's first. In 2002, she published a book on perennial plants called *How Our Garden Grows* and has written monthly gardening columns for eight years. She is also an active member of the Terrace Park Japanese Garden Restoration Committee and Sioux Falls Beautiful, which fostered the Mary Jo Wegner Arboretum. She has also served on the McCrory Garden's Board.

Special awards she has received include the John Robertson Award from the SD State Horticulture Society and the Sioux Falls Mayor's Beautification Award. She also volunteers as an educator, program presenter and writer for water, soil, gardening, native plants, ethnobotany, landscaping and ecology related issues.

Mary Ellen has great interest in her family and enjoys gardening, walking, reading, writing, and the arts (photography & painting).