

Award: Competitive 250 + : Joan Gottlieb

Please give a description of the service nominee provided for the organization.

Joan is a fixture at our Wild Plant Nursery, and she does it all: collect and clean seeds, plant, transplant, weed, water, remove invasive species, and plant native species. As an experienced, long-time volunteer with Earth Sangha, she is able to lead volunteers in many settings and teach them about our work with native plants. Joan is also one of the most reliable nursery volunteers, capable of maintaining daily watering and other tasks on her own when staff are working elsewhere. Her knowledge of local ecology is a great benefit to Earth Sangha's fieldwork as well as her own backyard and neighborhood parks. Joan's leadership and independence make her an invaluable part of the volunteer team.

Who or what (organization, group, or population) was directly impacted by nominee's volunteer service?

Joan is a great teacher to people with all levels of experience; she can easily build a rapport with elementary or high school volunteers, college students, and adults. She knows it is important to explain both the overall concept and technical nature of Earth Sangha's work. As an organization that works with over 600 volunteers and around 40 local schools this past year, Earth Sangha really benefits from Joan's leadership. Joan has also become an example for her neighbors as a result of her work in Luria Park.

Please provide a quote from the Executive Director and/or the Volunteer Coordinator about the nominee.

Joan is one of our most valued volunteers and friends. She's principled and private and yet she's one of the most effective and all-around volunteer leaders ever! We are dependent on her well-tuned sense of responsibility. She's always learning, and her curiosity interest in experimenting in the field makes her eminently valuable to us. Joan is also discreetly offering her help behind the scene.

In your own words, please tell us why this nominee should receive this award.

Joan's way of working is meticulous and thoughtful, qualities that are essential to working with a diverse array of plant species, places, and people. She seems to approach each task with a goal of learning more about restoration and our region's ecology. This is evident in Joan's own neighborhood, where she has taken what she learned as an Earth Sangha volunteer and applied it to restoring Luria Park. As the site manager for Luria Park's Invasive Management Area, she has gotten the community involved in efforts to remove invasive species and plant natives supplied by Earth Sangha in their place. It is exciting to see Joan's work inspire other volunteers, and her ability to devote herself to both Earth Sangha's regular work as well as her own project is extremely impressive. Joan is also pursues her commitment to local conservation as a Virginia Master Naturalist.