



# Saint Louis County

**Administration** • 100 North Fifth Avenue West, Room 202 • Duluth, MN 55802  
Phone: (218) 726-2450 • Fax: (218) 726-2469 • [www.stlouiscountymn.gov](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov)

**Kevin Z. Gray**  
County Administrator

## NEWS RELEASE

June 9, 2011

**CONTACT:** Patty Swedberg,  
St. Louis County Extension Office  
Duluth, MN 218-733-2879

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **Extension Educator Bob Olen Receives American Horticultural Society National Teaching Award**

The St. Louis County Extension Office is proud to announce Robert M. Olen, Extension Horticulture Educator for St. Louis County, has been named the recipient of the American Horticultural Society's (AHS) National Teaching Award. There is one award given for each of the twelve categories. Individuals, organizations, and businesses who receive these national awards represent the best in American gardening. Mr. Olen has been recognized as "an individual whose ability to share his horticultural knowledge with others has contributed to a better public understanding of the plant world and its important influence on society." This distinguished award will be presented on June 9, 2011 during the Great American Gardeners National Awards Ceremony and Banquet at River Farm, the AHS's headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia.

Mr. Olen is an educator for the University of Minnesota Extension operating out of the St. Louis County Extension Office in Duluth, MN. For over 30 years he has focused on cold climate gardening and conducts extensive varietal trials using his research plots to determine which plant varieties best suit northern Minnesota conditions. He developed one of the earliest Master Gardener programs in the state, which continues to be one of the most established and successful programs in Minnesota. His work with commercial growers has emphasized local fruit and vegetable production and implementing innovative ways to extend the growing season.

-MORE-

Olen conducts a popular weekly call-in radio program, hosts a locally produced Public Broadcasting System (PBS) gardening show, writes a monthly gardening feature for “The Senior Reporter” magazine, and is a presenter at many workshops, seminars, and conferences throughout St. Louis County. County Commissioner Peg Sweeney works with Bob regularly as a member of the County Extension Committee. She noted that, “Bob is a born teacher. He shares knowledge and expertise with amazing generosity. His enthusiasm for all subjects related to horticulture is inspiring. And his humor, warmth and humanity invite non-gardeners to consider the possibilities that gardening holds, on whatever scale one can manage.”

###