

IMPACT

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Certified Nursery Professional training improves green industry in North Idaho

The Situation

The Certified Nursery Professional program was started by the Idaho Nursery and Landscape Association (INLA) in 1983 as a way to distinguish knowledgeable nursery staff. The certification process consists of a written exam, which is supported by the manual and a plant identification exam, supported by PowerPoint slides consisting of pictures of 423 plants that are distributed by INLA on a CD. Preparation for the exams has historically been through self-study.

Statewide passing rates with candidates engaging in self study for the exams have been were 54%. The program was struggling due to a general lack of candidates and low passing rates. It was clear that, in order to improve candidates' successful certification, a course was needed.

The objective of this training program was to provide CNP candidates with a course to increase their success rate in taking the two CNP certification exams required by INLA.

Our Response

In 2011 and 2012, a training course was administered to increase the horticultural knowledge of staff and to increase success in achieving certification. In 2011 the CNP training was offered in Bonner County while in 2012 the training was offered in Kootenai County. University of Idaho Extension worked closely with the Idaho Nursery and Landscape Association to offer an nine-week course using the INLA's Certified Nursery Professional (CNP) materials to pass the written and plant identification exams. The Course consisted of nine night sessions that went over the 23 chapters in the manual and the 13 plant identification groups. The goal of each lesson was to encourage



2011 class of North Idaho Certified Nursery Professionals.
Photo by Mike Bauer

discussion and understanding of the material. A written pre-test based on information in the manual was given at the beginning of the course and a post-test given at the end of the course. Also, using the PowerPoint slides, a plant identification pre-test was administered at the beginning of the course and a post-test given at the end of the course. A hands on plant identification practice session occurred in the summer to better prepare participants for the plant ID exam.

Program Outcomes

Between the 2011 and 2012 classes, this course trained 29 participants. Of the 29 candidates the took the written CNP exam, 22 passed. Of the 20 candidates that took the plant identification exam, 14 passed.

Test score and passing rate data collected from the participants was compared to statewide passing rates

of CNP candidates that took the exams after self study. The information illustrates the course significantly improves passing rates of CNP candidates.

North Idaho CNP Pre and Post Test Scores – 2011-12

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Written CNP exam	62% (n=40)	70% (n=33)
Plant ID	33% (n=38)	37% (n=28)

CNP Exam Passing Rates - North Idaho vs. Statewide

	North Idaho 2011-2012	Statewide 1995-2012
Written CNP exam	76% (n=29)	56% (n=121)
Plant ID	70% (n=20)	54% (n=121)

The Future

There is clear benefit and demand for a certified Nursery Professional course in north Idaho. Further, there is demand throughout the state for a course to help candidates study for the Certified Nursery Professional exams. Certification clearly helps green industry credibility through a network of recognized experts.

Next, course materials will be further developed to be delivered statewide through on-site or online classes.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

- University of Idaho Extension Horticulture Topic Team
- Idaho Nursery and Landscape Association
- Silverwood Theme Park
- Northland Nursery Aspen Nursery

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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