

## Multi-state horticulture in-service training for county Extension educators

### AT A GLANCE

**Multi-state horticulture in-service workshop allows educators to receive cutting edge training, and keep up-to-date on the latest consumer horticulture information.**

### The Situation

Successful urban horticultural programming, due to the nature and breadth of subject matter, requires substantial knowledge and expertise to be a useful resource to the public. At a minimum, essential knowledge includes basic plant growth and development, soils and soil fertility, plant material attributes and selection, landscape design, plant problem diagnosis, and some expertise in pathology, entomology, weed science and principles of IPM. This knowledge must be applied across a diverse set of plant species that include grasses, annual and perennial flowers, vegetables, fruits and woody ornamentals. Consequently, it is critical to provide ongoing consumer horticultural training to county educators with horticulture appointments or duties. On-going education will improve basic knowledge to those with minimal horticultural expertise and expand the expertise of those with a horticultural background.

### Our Response

A College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Topic Team Grant (\$2,500) and a federal NIFA grant (\$14,000) were obtained to support the development of a two-day multi-state urban horticulture workshop specifically designed for county educators from Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Utah. The University of Idaho Extension Horticulture Topic Team, led by Lance Ellis, organized a workshop where presenters taught on timely and critical topics essential to suc-



Field sessions at the urban horticulture in-service training for county educators, held June 26 & 27, 2014 in Island Park, Idaho.

cessful Extension education. Speakers and topics included: Dr. Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, "Bees and Wasps: Identification, Habitat, and Management." Dr. Ed Bechinski, University of Idaho, "Shrub and Tree Borers: They Aren't Boring." Dr. Barry Jacobsen, Montana State University, "Diseases of Fruits and Vegetables." Dr. Wayne Jones, University of Idaho, "Tree and Shrub Disease" (tour). Dr. Stephen Love, University of Idaho, "Understanding Native Habitats and Identifying Native Plants" (tour).

The in-service training was held June 26th & 27th in Island Park, Idaho. A fully-equipped portable diagnostic kit was provided for each workshop participant, specifically to improve plant problem diagnosis and to assist in resolving plant-based issues in urban horticultural settings. A short hands-on session was provided to train each person on the effective use of the diagnostic tools.

## **Program Outcomes**

Thirty one Extension faculty members from Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Utah attended the in-service training. A post-training survey was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the program, the value of the learning experience and the desire of participants to attend similar future events.

Attendees rated elements of the workshop on a scale of 1 to 5: with each respondent indicating they (1) strongly disagreed, (2) disagreed, (3) felt neutral, (4) agreed and (5) strongly agreed with the survey statement.

Average attendees response was 4.35 when asked if they improved their practical knowledge of pest management in home landscape and gardens settings.

Average attendee response was 4.35 regarding improved ability to meet clientele needs on subject related to home pest management.

Average attendee response was 4.35 when asked if information given at the in-service would help them diagnose home horticulture problems.

Average attendee response was 4.47 when rating the usefulness of the tools and books received at the in-service in diagnosing home horticultural problems.

Average attendee response was 4.70 when indicating whether the training met their expectations for a faculty level workshop on insect and disease issues.

Attendees indicated with a 4.05 average response that the workshop will better equip them with diagnostic skills needed to make appropriate control recommendations.

The majority of attendees indicated that they believed that this should be an annual event.

## **The Future**

Due to the overwhelmingly positive feedback following the 2014 training session, a second in-service program is being planned for the summer of 2015. As with the first in-service, the upcoming session will be a multi-state event, with invitations being issued to educators with horticultural appointments from Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Utah. A second NIFA grant has been obtained to support this 2015 workshop.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**Lance Ellis**, Extension Educator  
University of Idaho Extension, Fremont County  
19 West 1st North  
St. Anthony, ID 83445  
Phone: 208.624.3102  
Fax: 208.624.1527  
E-mail: ellis@uidaho.edu

**Stephen Love**, Horticulture Specialist  
Aberdeen R & E Center  
1693 S 2700 W  
Aberdeen, ID 83210  
Phone: 208.397.4181  
Fax: 208.397.4311  
E-mail: slove@uidaho.edu

**Ed Bechinski**, Entomology Specialist  
University of Idaho  
Dept. Plant, Soil and Entomological Sciences  
875 Perimeter Drive, MS 2339  
Moscow, ID 83844-2339  
Phone: 208.885.5972  
E-mail: edb@uidaho.edu

12-15|ellis-horticulture.pub  
1/15