

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Enhancing Idaho's integrated pest management strategies through Extension

AT A GLANCE

University of Idaho Extension enhances Integrated Pest Management among local agricultural professionals, including horticulture and small farms educators and master gardener volunteers.

The Situation

The horticulture and small farm programming in Idaho faces unique challenges related to pest management, including limited resources and varying levels of expertise in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies. Effective pest management is essential for sustainable horticulture and small farm practices, protecting plant materials and maintaining environmental health. Additionally, educators need practical skills in identifying, scouting and monitoring pests to better serve their communities.

Our Response

To address these challenges, University of Idaho Extension organized a focus group of horticulture and small farm educators at a Priority Extension Theme (PET) meeting to discuss the practical implications of pest management and the importance of statewide IPM strategies. This engagement led to the development of educational training on IPM approaches and building participation in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) Pest Alert Network system.

A four-hour IPM workshop was conducted for horticultural and small farm educators and included master



Extension Specialist Armando Falcon-Brindis presenting at the IPM workshop in Cascade.

gardeners. This hands-on workshop focused on scouting, monitoring, identifying and recommending pest solutions. Our attention was on equipping educators and participants with essential IPM skills and providing innovative tools and strategies that can easily be incorporated into education programs.

Throughout the training, participants were introduced to the PNW Pest Alert Network and innovative technologies (hardware and software) to identify arthropods and weeds, which provided them with tools to alert their communities about pest threats and enabled them to share vital information through a collaborative network.

Program Outcomes

The initiative has yielded significant outcomes. We engaged 26 participants in the training. There was great interest in the PNW Pest Alert Network system and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices, suggesting further training.

Inside the workshop, we surveyed participants to collect data on interest and future participation in the PNW Pest Alert Network. Among the 20 respondents, 40% were already aware of the PNW Pest Alert Network website, while 60% expressed a strong willingness to contribute content or participate in discussions to improve the platform.

This level of interest highlights the potential for community-driven enhancements to the PNW Pest Alert Network website, fostering collaboration among the horticultural and small farm educators. The future involvement will support the growth and effectiveness of the PNW Pest Alert Network as a valuable tool for real-time pest management statewide.

During the IPM workshop participants were equipped with the skills necessary to implement effective IPM strategies and core concepts of IPM. For instance, participants received scouting kits to gather relevant information on pests in landscape, garden or small farm settings.

Scouting kits included the following:

- Examinations: Clipboard, pens and scouting template paperwork
- Tools: Soil knives, pruning shears and five small magnifiers
- Containers: Tub for carrying supplies and plastic bags for collection
- Identifications: Acetone and cotton balls provided for collection

- Recommendations: Books for identifying pests through science-based research

A post-workshop survey in which 11 of the 26 attendees responded to the following:

- 91% are better prepared to implement IPM practices
- 82% benefited from the scouting kit
- 100% will participate in future IPM trainings

The Future

Building on the success of these initiatives, we plan to organize a series of training sessions focused on the importance of IPM strategies and their collaboration on future community-supported posting on the statewide Pest Alert Network. Data will be collected on how to effectively post alerts for the statewide Pest Alert Network during crucial growing seasons. Future training will ensure that educators and master gardeners can confidently share information and contribute to community awareness, fostering a proactive approach to pest management decisions across the state of Idaho.

By fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous learning, University of Idaho Extension aims to strengthen the statewide approach to IPM, cultivating change in the sustainability and productivity of Idaho's horticulture and small farms programming while improving statewide pest management decisions.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Jemila Chellappa, Area Extension Educator • University of Idaho Extension, Canyon County • 208-459-6003 • jemila@uidaho.edu

Kimberly Tate, Associate Extension Educator • University of Idaho Extension, Boise • 208-364-4581 • ktate@uidaho.edu

Armando Falcon-Brindis, Extension Specialist • Parma Research and Extension Center • 208-722-6701 • afalconbrindis@uidaho.edu

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