



EXTENSION IMPACT

Supporting Safe & Sustainable Gardening

Vegetable gardening is important to many Wisconsin households with more than 440,000 households (19%) purchasing vegetable plants over a one-year period and 320,000 households (14%) purchasing vegetable seeds over a one-year period. Approximately 1.5 million adults in Wisconsin (32%) have a garden of some kind. Due to the pandemic, stay-at-home orders and fear over disease transmission, many Wisconsinites sought alternative ways to learn about home horticulture and gardening in 2020. Furthermore, the pandemic seemed to cause some people to start gardening for the first time, or to take on home gardening beautification projects.

The UW–Madison Division of Extension Horticulture program serves the people of Wisconsin through county offices and also covers a wide range of technical support through soil testing and analysis, general plant disease diagnostics, turfgrass disease diagnostics, general insect identification, commercial fruit production, commercial vegetable entomology, commercial vegetable pathology, and commercial produce safety. The program is staffed by Extension educators and on-campus specialists throughout the state.

In response to the pandemic, the Extension Horticulture program moved to an online teaching approach to support the gardening and horticulture efforts of the people of Wisconsin. Updating and maintaining web-based resources and social media presence were key ways to provide research-based information, and live streaming lectures and workshops were one of the primary ways Extension’s Horticulture program reached audiences.

In 2020, Extension Horticulture reached 28,500 participants through its outreach activities. Through online and safe in-person education, Extension supported Wisconsinites in successfully growing their own food and to help them be better stewards of their environment as gardeners. For example, participants learned about gardening basics, growing healthy fruits/vegetables, environmental sustainability when gardening

Through Extension’s Horticulture program, people in households and commercial horticulture practitioners are becoming more sufficient in growing their own food and reducing negative environmental impacts when caring for plants, growing food and gardening.

and other topics. Our state specialists and county educators reached Wisconsinites through in-person programming when it was deemed safe, and one-on-one plant care solutions through submission of samples to insect and plant disease diagnostic labs. Across all outreach efforts most learners indicated that their knowledge or understanding increased due to participating in one of the Extension events.



The Horticulture program is part of Extension’s Agriculture Institute. Learn more by visiting hort.extension.wisc.edu.

in 2020



20,000

community engagements through plant diagnostics & horticulture inquiries answered by County Educators & Master Gardener Volunteers



5,000+

one-on-one consults based on analyzed plant & insect samples



2,600+

training contacts through horticulture workshops



Extension
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