

# IMPACT



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## District IV Spanish Master Gardener Program

### *The Situation*

Over the past decades the Extension Master Gardener educational program has assisted thousands of small farmers and gardeners produce healthier and more productive gardens. This program had until 2003 only been offered in English. Due to language barriers there existed a population of underserved clients who spoke only Spanish.

### *Our Response*

Extension educators became aware of the interest of Spanish Speakers to receive training in growing and maintaining their landscapes and gardens. These educators began developing curricula for a Spanish Master Gardener course in 2001. Near the end of that year the course was set up and publicized through local Spanish newspapers. Flyers in Spanish were also placed at local establishments that served the Spanish speaking population. Those efforts failed to draw a single student to the course.

The following year we duplicated the above efforts. In addition we set up manned information booths outlining the program. The booths were set up at fairs during the Spanish celebrations in Bannock County. These efforts also failed to draw any students to the course.

During the 2003 program year educators met with the leadership of various church groups in the area, and outlined the program to them.

### *Program Outcomes*

The church leaders were enthusiastic about the opportunity for their members to receive gardening training in their own language. Extension educators allowed the leadership of these groups to determine the time, location, and content of the course. Six topics were selected from the Master Gardener program that the leaders felt the members would need. These included soil management, soil texture, irrigation, soil fertility, disease management, and weed identification.

Courses were taught in Pocatello, Preston, and Idaho Falls. The leadership of the Spanish community in Pocatello decided to have the classes offered following church services (Mass) on Sunday. In Idaho Falls the course was offered at the local church, and in Preston classes were held at the extension office. Holding the course at the church was the most successful way to draw students. No flyers were sent out and no publicity of any kind was developed. The course was publicized solely by word of mouth between the Spanish speaking church members.

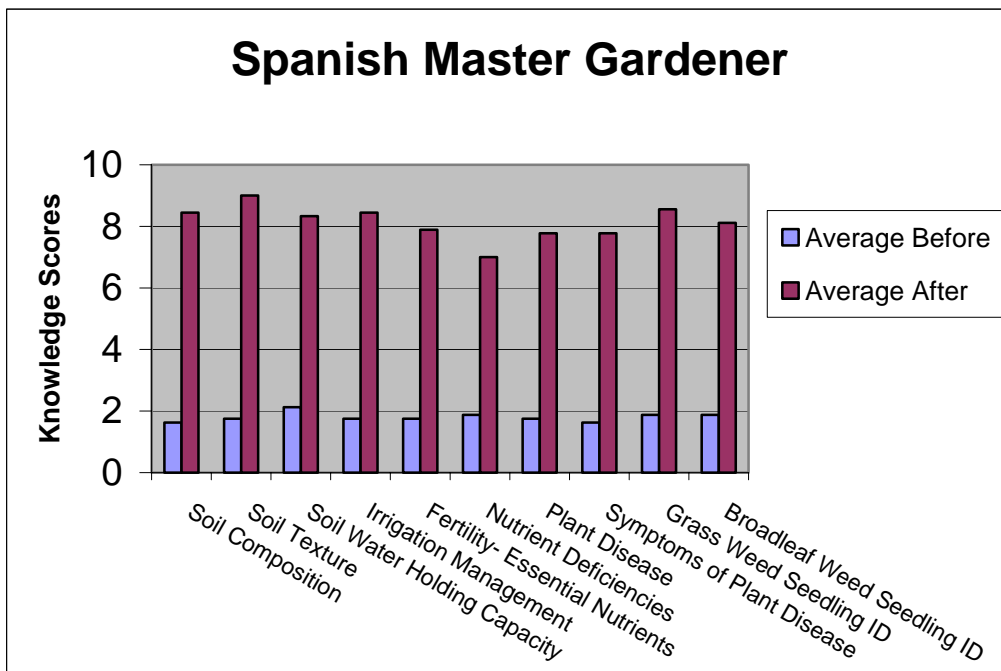
At the Pocatello location all six courses were taught. Each course had an attendance from 25 to 36 participants. Each time there were a few new participants. Over 90 students took at least one of the classes. There were an equal number of female students as male. The number of youth participating in each class ranged from 7 to 15.

The Idaho Falls location drew over 20 students. Two of the courses were taught in Idaho Falls. At the

Preston location four courses were taught with an attendance of six students between the classes.

During the final class the students evaluated the class by scoring their knowledge of the subjects

before they took the course and their new knowledge following the Spanish Master Gardener course. The results are included in the following table.



There was an increase in knowledge realized by the students following the Spanish Master Gardener course. The students learned the most in soil topics and weed identification. The increase in knowledge was less pronounced in the fertility and plant disease classes (these courses were more technically challenging).

The Spanish Master Gardener course will be modified according to the results of the above study and offered in additional locations.

The church has offered to donate a plot of land for the Spanish-speaking members to plant a garden and begin using their new knowledge to supplement their family's food resources.

### ***For More Information***

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