District IV Master Gardeners lead home horticulture program

**The Situation**
Each year University of Idaho Cooperative Extension System County Offices receive thousands of calls from backyard enthusiasts with questions ranging from apples to landscaping to zucchini. The demand for accurate helpful information to solve home horticultural problems has placed a claim on extension agent's limited time in assisting with answering these questions.

**Our Response**
Because extension faculty time is limited, a volunteer program called Master Gardener was developed and implemented in southeast Idaho in 1991. Requirements to become a Master Gardener are 35 hours of intensive classroom training and 35 hours of hands-on applied horticultural service to the community. Classroom training is provided by University of Idaho Cooperative Extension System faculty, Rick's College staff, and professionals from greenhouse and landscaping enterprises. Only after having completed this rigorous program can individuals be certified as Master Gardeners.

**Achievements**
During 1993, 57 beginning and 25 advanced Master Gardeners completed classroom training at two locations and hands-on training in their home county extension offices. The combined time volunteered by these individuals to their respective county extension offices totaled more than 1350 hours in helping extension agents solve more that 11,000 home horticulture problems.

Increase in number of hours and calls by Master Gardeners

Hours spent by Master Gardeners

---

The University of Idaho is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educational institution. University of Idaho, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Idaho counties cooperating.
Master Gardeners along with the cooperation of the City of Pocatello Parks and Recreation Department initiated a tree inventory program of the greater Pocatello area. This step in developing and implementing a tree health plan will reduce tree maintenance expenses, increase life span of trees, and improve the appearance of the community.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Cooperative Extension Specialists

Cooperative Extension Agents in Bannock, Bingham, Bonneville, Caribou, Franklin, Jefferson, and Power Counties

Sunnyside Gardens, Idaho Falls

Town and Country Gardens, Inc., Idaho Falls

Rick's College, Rexburg

Down to Earth Floral and Garden Center, Idaho Falls

Pocatello Floral and Garden Center, Pocatello

The Future

In 1994, we will be offering the Master Gardener program to residents in southeast Idaho. Our goal is to train 50 beginning Master Gardeners and 25 advanced Master Gardeners to assist with answering home horticultural questions, and in developing educational programs for this audience.

As an outgrowth to the Master Gardener program, a training and certification program for professional tree care services is being developed and will be offered in the area for the first time in 1994.