Horticulture is Growing in Southern Idaho!

The Situation
Interest in urban horticulture is growing in Southern Idaho. Many residents have an interest in growing fruits and vegetables. Increased residential building during the past 5 years has resulted in many well-landscaped homesites. Urban population in Idaho is now 50% of the total.

In 1995, 65% of the phone calls received at the Extension Office in Blaine County were horticulture related. In 1995, Blaine, Butte, Camas, Cassia, Jerome, Minidoka, and Twin Falls Counties received over 4500 calls for horticultural assistance.

Because of the increasing need for horticultural information, a well trained group of volunteers to assist Extension Educators is a valuable resource.

Our Response
The University of Idaho has met the challenge by training Idaho Master Gardeners who can not only answer the horticulture questions, but can offer programs to develop the beauty of Southern Idaho and enhance the satisfaction of the many gardeners living here.

Through the volunteer requirement (part of the Master Gardener training) Master Gardeners provide needed services, while expanding their personal skills.

Achievements
Since 1988, 230 volunteers have completed the Master Gardener Training held in Blaine, Butte, Gooding, Jerome, Minidoka, and Twin Falls Counties. In 1995, 33 new Master Gardeners were trained in Blaine County in Hailey and 15 graduated from the Gooding County class. Residents from Camas, Cassia, Lemhi, and Lincoln Counties have also been trained in Master Gardener classes.

In 1995, 778 volunteer hours were contributed by 54 volunteers across the above counties and reached 3000 clients. Besides time spent answering questions at plant clinics in Extension Offices, projects such as composting demonstration sites and collection of grass recycling data were completed. Master Gardeners are active in volunteer scheduling and training, presenting programs, and writing articles. About one fourth of the volunteers has continued their service as Advanced Master Gardeners by continuing to train and provide additional volunteer service.

The Future
In the spring of 1996, the Idaho Master Gardener Training will be offered in Jerome and Twin Falls Counties. In addition, a series of 4 workshops in Twin Falls will be offered for advanced Master Gardener training.

For More Information
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