

Horticulture is Growing in Southern Idaho!

The Situation

Interest in urban horticulture is growing in southern Idaho. Many residents grow fruits and vegetables. In fact, vegetable gardening ranked seventh in activity interest among Twin Falls residents in 1995. Increased residential building during the past five years has resulted in many well-landscaped home sites. Idaho urban population in Idaho is now 57 percent of the total, according to the U.S. Census Bureau in 1990.

Calls to county Extension offices requesting horticultural assistance are on the rise. In order to provide this service, 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 answer these horticulture questions. Master gardeners can also 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, 403 volunteers have completed the master gardener Training held in Blaine, Butte, Cassia, Custer, Gooding, Jerome, Minidoka, and

Twin Falls counties. In 1999, 53 new master gardeners were trained in Blaine, Twin Falls, Minidoka, and Butte counties. Residents from Camas, Lemhi, and Lincoln counties have also been trained in Master Gardener classes.

In Minidoka County, master gardeners staffed a Tuesday afternoon plant clinic, a new activity this year. The clinic was very positive in fostering good public relations and enhancing the Master gardeners' problem solving and hands-on garden training skills. In Blaine County, Master gardeners continue to diagnose plant problems on Monday afternoons at the Extension Office Plant Clinic. Master gardeners in Twin Falls have their own club and are participating in joint activities with the Twin Falls County Fair. About one-fourth of the volunteers continue their service as Advanced Master gardeners.

The Future

In the spring of 2000, the Idaho Master Gardener Training will be offered in Twin Falls, Minidoka, Gooding and Butte Counties. In addition, a series of workshops or tours will be offered in District III for advanced Master Gardener training.

For More Information

Contact your local University of Idaho Cooperative Extension Office: Twin Falls, 734-9590, Rupert 436-7184, Arco 527-8587, and Gooding 934-4417