

K-State Garden Hour Webinar Series (Signature)

Situation

The global pandemic in 2020 sparked new ways of working around the world. The Horticulture Program Focus Team observed the surge in new gardeners that followed stay-at-home orders and subsequent food security concerns. The team has a wide array of expertise and noted that a higher-level program would reach more people than they could individually, in their local networks. We also recognized that each team member has many presentations to deliver to a new, widespread audience via online tools. Our team sought to leverage digital communication resources with our in-house horticultural expertise to reach stakeholders needing to navigate their new world of food gardening. An additional need is the ability to engage with existing stakeholders lacking adequate outlets for gardening interests and activities. With the success of the program, we decided to continue the webinars into 2021. The program continued to be popular and an effective way to reach audiences safely, during such an uncertain time.

Public Value

For the Spring 2021 and Summer 2021 seasons, we recorded over 9,541 total participants. Our live attendance was recorded at 4,875 and 4,666 people watching the recording. This exceeded our participation from last year by almost double in just 9 webinar sessions. Our highest attended webinar was on Container Gardening, with 955 live participants. We had Kansan's log on from 104 counties. Participants from 37 states and 4 international countries have logged on to hear our team present learning opportunities. We have gathered extensive evaluation data and new contacts for future programming, including new and underserved audiences. Additionally, team engagement increased significantly. Speakers boosted their impact and stakeholder engagement during a time when face-to-face training was not possible.

Outcomes

Short-Term (Knowledge)

- Participants increase their knowledge by attending webinars.
- Participants have an outlet for gardening activity during the pandemic, led by KSRE staff.
- Participants increase their knowledge about K-State Research & Extension and the services they provide
- Horticulture PFT members have a greater sense of teamwork and camaraderie.

Indicators

- Evaluation surveys indicate knowledge gained before and after viewing the webinar.
- Participation is tracked through Zoom registrations, evaluation submissions, and video views.
- Increased sign-ups and website views/social media shares for the weekly Extension Horticulture eNewsletter.

- Horticulture PFT members continue to serve in critical program delivery roles (speaker, host, moderator, etc.).

Medium-Term (Behavior)

- Participants make changes to their gardening practices based on new knowledge gained in the webinar series.
- Participants help their friends, family, and neighbors make changes to their gardening practices based on new knowledge gained in the webinar series.
- Participants consider becoming an Extension Master Gardener volunteer to share their gardening interests and expand the reach of KSRE.
- Participants increase their use of and engagement with K-State Research and Extension services
- Horticulture PFT members continue to increase their participation in the program and their satisfaction with statewide teamwork through the PFT increases.

Indicators

- Follow-up surveys indicate knowledge and value gained from the program, changes to gardening practices for themselves, and people close to them.
- Increased participation in the Extension Master Gardener volunteer program.
- Horticulture PFT continued involvement with the program, and survey results indicating satisfaction and increased network effects.

Long-Term (Change in Condition)

- Participants are more food secure as a result of learning and implementing garden best practices presented in the webinar series.
- Participants are more confident in their gardening activities as a result of learning best practices.
- Increased participation in KSRE Horticulture programs and volunteer hours donated.
- Horticulture PFT develops quality programs based on needs expressed by participants in the webinar series and continues to function at a high level as a team.

Indicators

- A long-term follow-up survey to determine changed practices, the ability to grow, preserve, and prepare food in their garden, gardening confidence, and economic gains associated with participation in the program.
- Year over year increase in KSRE horticulture program participation and volunteer hours donated.
- Horticulture PFT continuing to provide high-quality programs both statewide and locally and working well together as a team to meet stakeholder needs.

Outputs

- Engaging new and existing audiences in an online environment.
- Learning opportunities for the public and advanced training for Extension Master Gardener volunteers.
- Extensive evaluation data about knowledge gained, level of participation, understanding and value of Extension, interest for new topics/programs, and intention to change behavior.
- New contacts, by country, state, and county for local agents to reach out to.
- Increased Horticulture PFT engagement and camaraderie leading to improved programs, greater reach and impact to Kansas citizens.