

Horticulture soil testing services increase environmental stewardship in Kansas

The Situation

Kansas citizens are eager to grow healthy plants in lawns, gardens, and landscapes. These citizens are using soil-testing services provided through their local Extension offices across Kansas to diagnose, amend, and improve soil. Soils vary greatly across the state and Extension agents create individualized reports with customized interpretations for Kansas citizens. Many soils in horticulture settings are high in phosphorus and other nutrients, thus soil test recommendations are a critical tool to help citizens prevent the use of unneeded applications of nutrients. This results in less pollution and better water quality in our state.

What We Did

Horticulture Extension agents provided individualized soil test results interpretations for more than 2,000 Kansas citizens that not only resulted in better plant growth but also prevented unnecessary fertilizer applications.

Outcomes

A survey of soil testing clientele conducted in Johnson County returned 184 responses. Key outcomes include:

- 95% found the soil test results helpful in maintaining their plantings
- 77% improved timing of fertilizer applications
- 50% saved money because of the soil test
- 76% were more confident in managing their landscape plantings
- 85% found the results were helpful and concise
- 86% followed and implemented the recommendations
- 71% reported improved plant growth because of soil testing
- 93% were either extremely satisfied or satisfied with Extension

Success Story

Comments from clientele provide examples of the positive impact this service is having in Kansas:

- “As a result of this soil test, I know that the plants I've chosen for my yard are appropriate choices for my soil.”
- “The soil test results allowed me to speak to our lawn care company who had recommended additional soil amendments- but now I know these are not needed”.
- “Thank you, the plants are stronger and I have spent less money on fertilizer.”

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