Dave Francis, a Utah State University Extension associate professor, was recently named an eXtension Fellow by the eXtension Foundation, a national organization that helps Extension professionals increase measurable local impact with networks, resources and tools within the Extension system.

The eXtension Fellowship program selects Extension professionals to pursue research, development and dissemination of innovations of their choice that can increase the impact of Extension work in the future.

Francis’ project is called “Maker Movement, Horticulture Fusion.” His focus is on using technology to enhance the gardening experience and solve issues such as irrigation or pest control.

The Maker Movement refers to a shift taking place in the country that emphasizes the making and doing aspects of life in order to bring back creative skills.

“The Maker Movement is on the rise,” Francis said. “I’ve found that there is interest in the area of horticulture with a ‘techie’ component. My project takes elements of growing plants and technology and blends them.”