

2013 Utah IPM/SA Mini-Grant Final Project Report

Project Title: A Guide to Common Gardening Questions: Step-by-step recommendations for organic vegetable and fruit gardening in Northern Utah

Location of Project (Counties in Utah): Salt Lake County, Davis County – copies of guide disseminated to all Extension county offices in Utah

Total Grant Award: \$3000.00

Principal Investigator: Katie Wagner

Co- Principal Investigator(s): Shawn Olsen

Summary of Project

The funded grant proposal promised to create a manual that would introduce readers to basic IPM and sustainable agriculture concepts. *A Guide to Common Organic Gardening Questions* was completed and disseminated to participants during an Organic Growing Workshop held March 29th, 2014 in Salt Lake County. Soon after, complimentary copies of the guide were disseminated to contributing authors and Extension Service and NRCS offices throughout Utah. Evaluation forms were attached to all complimentary copies for user feedback on the guide (See evaluation and impact section). It was requested that at least one specialist review and contribute to manual content. The guide contains contributions and was reviewed by 12 specialists.

Objectives of Project:

The following project objectives were met (as outlined in the project proposal):

- A Guide to Common Organic Gardening Questions was co-authored with the project co-leader.
- Co-authors attended Dr. Jennifer Reeve's 'Organic Production Workshop' presented during the 2013 Urban and Small Farms Conference for ideas and up-to-date information.
- Researched additional information needed for guide completion (in particular, table information).
- Worked with specialists for content and review (12 specialists contributed to the project).
- Worked with USU marketing for design, format, and printing of the guide.
- Disseminated printed copies to garden educators (Wasatch Community Gardens, Extension faculty, NRCS offices, local nurseries and botanical gardens). Office copies available for Master Gardener volunteers answering garden questions.

Results of Project

The main result of the project was the creation of the guide itself. In addition, it provided the structural framework for the 'Top 10 Organic Gardening Considerations' presentation at the Organic Growing Workshop in Salt Lake County on March 29th, and a 'Best Management Practices' presentation at the 2014 USU Extension Annual Conference in Logan. The guide was also accepted for presentation at the 2014 NACAA 99th Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference (AM/PIC) in Mobile, AL. The project leader is currently creating an 'Organic Gardening' lecture series based-off of the structural framework of the guide.

Evaluation and Impact:

A Guide to Common Organic Gardening Questions was evaluated by provided Western SARE evaluation forms. Two principle groups were asked to fill-out evaluations of the guide:

- 1) Participants of the Organic Growing Workshop held March 29th at Wheeler Historic Farm in Salt Lake County. 43 completed evaluations were returned. Evaluation results found:
 - 19% had an Extension role, 9% were farmer/ranchers, 2% had a University role, and 70% were other (including community garden managers and master gardeners). 2% marked no answer.
 - The book was rated as: 74% excellent, 19% good, and 7% no answer.
 - 100% respondents marked the book would improve their awareness of the topics covered and provide new knowledge. One respondent (2%) marked N/A to provided new skills with the remaining (98%) marking yes. In reference to the question about modifying options and attitudes, 83% responded yes, 12% responded no and 5% responded N/A. 95% responded the guide will improve advice they give to others and 5% marked N/A to the same question.
 - 91% responded they were likely to use some aspect of the guide in their farm/ranch/or home operation with 1 respondent (2%) marking no, 2 respondents (5%) marking N/A and 1 respondent (2%) not answering the question. 70% responded they would use the guide in an upcoming education program with 2% responding no and 26% responding N/A (2% gave no answer). 47% responded they would make the resource available to producers with 12% responding no and 36% responding N/A. 5% did not answer the question. Finally, 53% indicated they would use the guide as a professional development tool for their peers while 14% responded no and 31% responded N/A. 2% did not mark an answer.
 - 9% indicated they would use some aspect of the guide with 5 or fewer others in the next 12 months, 28% indicated 6-10 others, 37% indicated 11-50 others, 7% indicated 51-100 others, and 7% indicated greater than 100 others. 12% did not give a numerical answer. In total, participants indicated they would use some aspect of the guide with over 2,000 others.
 - Select evaluation comments included:

Use with Master Gardener volunteering (16%)

Use in community garden setting (19%)

Better able to respond to gardening questions (7%)

Teach neighbors and friends (9%)

Use with home garden (5%)

Teach students/other educators (5%)

Teach producers (5%)

Apply toward start of career as producer (2%)

- 2) The same survey was disseminated to Extension educators and NRCS offices. To date, 6 completed surveys have been returned, 83% with an Extension role and 17% marked as 'other'. 83% marked the guide as 'excellent' while 17% marked 'good'. Results show 100% of respondents feel the guide improves their awareness of topics covered, provides new knowledge and provides new skills. 67% felt the guide modified their opinions or attitudes while 33% marked it did not. 83% felt the guide would improve the advice they give to others while 17% marked N/A.
 - 100 % of respondents indicated they would use some aspect of the guide in their operation or educational programs. 83% indicated they would make the guide available to producers while 17% marked N/A. Finally, 67% responded they would use the guide as a professional development tool for peers while 33% marked N/A.

- 50% indicated they would use some aspect of the guide with 50-100 others in the next 12 months, 17% indicated 50-100 others, and 17% indicated greater than 100 others. 17% did not give a numerical answer. In total, participants indicated they would use some aspect of the guide with over 650 others.
- Select evaluation comments included:

Use as reference in gardening classes.

I teach nutrition classes and encourage gardening. This will be an excellent tool in teaching my teachers as well as a great resource for us to share.

Share information from book and workshop with others regarding organic gardening.

A Guide to Common Organic Gardening Questions will provide possible topics of interest and a structural framework for future organic gardening programming, like the Organic Growing Workshop, the Urban and Small Farms Conference and an organic gardening class series. In addition, concepts in the guide will be demonstrated at the USU Extension Demonstration Teaching Garden at Wheeler Historic Farm in Salt Lake County. The guide will also help Master Gardener volunteers answer public organic gardening questions.

Educational Outreach:

- Copies of the guide were distributed to contributing writers, USU county Extension offices and NRCS offices throughout the state of Utah.
- The guide was presented at 2014 USU Extension Annual Conference and has been accepted for presentation at the 2014 NACAA 99th Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference (AM/PIC) in Mobile, AL.

Educational Products Produced:

- Presentation '*A Guide to Common Organic Gardening Questions*' – 2014 USU Extension Annual Conference – Logan, UT.
- Presentation 'Top 10 Organic Growing Considerations' - 2014 Organic Growing Workshop – Murray City, UT.
- Presentation 'Organic Vegetable Gardening' – Jordan Valley Conservation Garden Park – West Jordan, UT.
- Presentation '*A Guide to Common Organic Gardening Questions*' - 2014 NACAA 99th Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference (AM/PIC) - Mobile, AL.