

Extension's Successful Gardener

Strategic Plan

**August 23-24, 2005
October 14, 2005**

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Mission:

Helping Carolinians increase their knowledge of gardening, manage their landscape investment and protect the environment.

Revised January 2000

Vision:

Extension's Successful Gardener is North Carolina's premier horticultural program providing timely, research-based, environmentally responsible education to consumers through the land-grant universities, county Extension centers, and other partners.

Adopted August 23, 2005

Background

A Brief History

Marketing research has shown that a highly visible, unified program provides a strong foundation for integrated programming and marketing efforts and helps secure program sponsors.

In 1998, Mecklenburg County's horticulture agents pulled all of their horticultural workshops under the umbrella of Extension's Successful Gardener. The next year, neighboring counties combined their separate newsletters and renamed the united effort, "*Extension's Successful Gardener*." Soon counties across the state joined this effort, using the magazine-quality newsletter and offering their own *Successful Gardener* workshops.

From its inception, Extension's Successful Gardener has integrated programming and marketing, both of which are based on research. The interdisciplinary team is one of the largest functioning teams in the organization and its efforts are high impact, highly visible and entrepreneurial. The program helps improve quality of life and ties in with environmental education and economics (early surveys showed that people who read the newsletter went to garden centers to buy the plants featured in the newsletter.) Secondary research shows that landscaping increases personal and community property values. The team has been successful in securing funding sponsors.

Extension's Successful Gardener is a model for integrated programming and marketing in North Carolina and other states. Team members have been invited to national conferences and other states to make presentations about this program. The overall program continues to grow and expand. Elements of the program are outlined below.

***Extension's Successful Gardener* Program Includes:**

(These are ongoing efforts of the team, in addition to new efforts/responsibilities outlined in Goals Section of this plan.)

- ***Extension's Successful Gardener* newsletter.** Published 10 months per year (Jan/Feb and June/July are combined issues), the award-winning, magazine-quality newsletter is planned and written by Extension horticulture agents. It is professionally edited and designed. Research shows that most people receive their gardening information from garden centers, nurseries and retail outlets, and the newsletter is sold to garden centers and nurseries to hand out to the public. In 2002, we began selling individual subscriptions, but the bulk of our sales continue to be to garden centers, nurseries and landscape contractors.

- **Extension's Successful Gardener workshops.** Every participating county is encouraged to "package" its horticultural programs as Successful Gardener. Marketing research indicates that offering Successful Gardener workshops at the same time every month can be an effective way to offer the program. For example, one county holds a Successful Gardener workshop the first Saturday of each month. Several other counties offer Successful Gardener through library branches and the local community colleges.
- **Extension's Successful Gardener Regional Seminars.** Teams of agents across the state offer regional seminars that continue to build an identity for the overall program. Both local workshops and the newsletter are marketed at these seminars. The locations vary. Some are self-contained seminars, and others are offered in conjunction with the Southern Spring Show in Charlotte, the Southern Ideal Home Shows in Greensboro and Raleigh, the Raleigh Home and Garden Show, the Carolina Garden Show in Hickory, the NC Arboretum in Asheville, and many others.
- **Extension's Successful Gardener Learning Centers** are a feature of the large home and garden shows in the state (Charlotte, Raleigh-2 shows per year, Greensboro, Hickory), which reach more than 150,000 people annually. Horticulture agents and Master Gardeners staff the Learning Centers and answer gardening questions and distribute the newsletter, soil test kits and other information. The Learning Centers promote Cooperative Extension and increase its visibility among show visitors.
- **Extension's Successful Gardener at work sites.** Agents offer *Successful Gardener* workshops to businesses for their employees. This is paired with a pitch to the company to consider ordering the newsletter for employees or to become an underwriter.
- **Permission marketing concepts** using *Successful Gardener* e-mail tips. Our most recent tool in building our brand and positioning this program is to offer e-mail tips. People may request e-mail tips when they visit www.successfulgardener.org or when they subscribe to the newsletter. Each month, people on this e-mail list receive *Successful Gardener* tips. In addition, we use this as an opportunity to market Cooperative Extension. We also will use this database to conduct market research. Permission marketing is an inexpensive way to reach large numbers of people often.
- **www.successfulgardener.org** This site offers helpful information and lists garden centers where people can pick up the newsletter. Counties are encouraged to link to this site.
- **Extension's Successful Gardener** tips are included on each show of *In the Garden with Bryce Lane*, a television show that airs on the statewide UNC-TV network. *Extension's Successful Gardener* is also promoted on *Almanac Gardener*, also on UNC-TV, and on commercial TV and radio stations in the state.

- ***Extension's Successful Gardener*** columns in selected newspapers and magazines across the state.
- **Sponsorship opportunities.** By positioning horticultural programs as *Extension's Successful Gardener* and coordinating the way we offer this program, we strengthen our ability to present proposals to prospective underwriters.

Local, State, National Recognition

Extension's Successful Gardener, both the newsletter and the overall educational program, has been recognized with numerous awards.

- North Carolina State Grange/Extension Foundation
- Garden Writers Association
- International Association of Business Communicators
- National Association of County Agricultural Agents
- Southern Extension Forest Resource Specialists
- N.C. Association of County Agricultural Agents
- Mecklenburg County Priority Awards
- Printing Industry of the Carolinas

Definitions

Words mean different things to different people. The following terms have different meanings within the Successful Gardener Team, within the Extension Service and among Extension partners.

For the purpose of this strategic plan the following words are defined as follows:

Consumer horticulture: all noncommercial horticulture

“Extension’s Successful Gardener” (E. S. G.): the branded consumer horticulture Extension program that includes: learning centers at garden and home shows, trade show and fair exhibits, workshops, seminars, newsletters, website, E-tips, tabloids, print media, television, radio, displays and other educational tools.

Internal audiences: groups directly associated with Cooperative Extension including paid professional and volunteer groups from NC State and A& T State Universities. These include but are not limited to the following: university departments and administration, Urban Horticulture Task Force (appointed by Dean, County Operation Team (COT), County Extension offices and staff, county government, volunteer groups associated with Extension such as Master Gardeners, local horticulture groups, advisory leadership system and 4-H volunteers.

External audiences: organizations and individuals not directly affiliated with Cooperative Extension. These groups and individuals include but are not limited to the following: green industry, businesses and organizations, schools, other governmental agencies, event organizers, and general public.

Overriding Concern of Team

The overriding concern of participants in “Extension’s Successful Gardener” Strategic Planning Session is the need for more support from Cooperative Extension and other departments of the universities, specifically from the Department of Horticultural Science in the form of more consumer/urban horticulture specialists. The demand is extremely high for consumer horticulture information and programs in counties across the state, yet the number of specialists with consumer versus commercial responsibilities is poorly correlated to the need/demand. Specifically, there’s a need for specialists to develop packaged programs for urban audiences including content and evaluation. Other needs include more organizational support for integrated programming and marketing, effective fundraising, and development of materials for use with mass media and evaluative impact of mass media.

Strategic Goals 2006-2008

Goal 1: Improve awareness of "Extension's Successful Gardener" program with both internal and external audiences					
2006 Priority Goal/Strategies					
1.1 Strategy: Develop internal marketing campaign					
Action Steps	Expected Outputs	Expected Outcomes	Resources Needed	Person(s) Responsible	Time Line
Develop PowerPoint for County Extension Directors (CEDs), District Extension Directors (DEDs), etc.	Urban horticulture PowerPoint presentation developed and delivered to CEDs, DEDs, COT	Endorsement from all DEDs to support brand and program	Face time Sales pitch	Cheryl Lloyd, Leah Chester-Davis, Fred Miller, Tom Melton	Jan-06
White paper on why administration should support E.S.G. program	Report stating current situation, what E.S.G. is about, and why the program is good for the entire Extension organization.	Administrative support for the program, resources for the program, newsletter subsidized, feedback	DED or Program Leader (PL) sponsor	Paul McKenzie, Leah Chester-Davis, Keith Baldwin, Karen Neill	Jan-06
Create horticultural agents package (Talking points, E.S.G. flyer)	Every agent gets personal visit using package	Agents buy-in to the E.S.G. program (at least 25% of new agents)	Permission to travel across counties, mileage, volunteers, listserv notification of new agents	Donna Teasley (coordinates calls)	Jan-06
Marketing to Department of Horticultural Science Department Head and Faculty, also with A&T	Develop strategy for securing support from department, make presentation to campus faculty	1 FTE's with Extension Consumer Horticulture responsibility hired in the department		Cheryl Lloyd, Carl Matyac, Toby Bost, Fred Miller, Deborah Crandall	Mar 06
Market the program across disciplines and with adjacent counties	Presentations at monthly staff meetings, county and district meetings in March for Integrated Programming under Brand	More integration of Successful Gardener, Model counties showing effectiveness	Ability to cross counties to work in teams, completed pre-packaged program	Aaron Lancaster - Mecklenburg Mark Blevins - Gaston Carl Matyac - Wake Shawn Banks - Johnston	Jan-06 – ongoing

Goal 1- Continued:
Improve awareness of “Extension’s Successful Gardener” program with both internal and external audiences.

	Strategies	Expected Results	Person(s) Responsible	Time Line
1.2	During each quarter, every E.S.G. county will offer at least one workshop or a series of workshops (December, January, February/March, April, May/June, July, August/ September, October, November).	Increase awareness of scheduled programs on Extension Calendar, newsletter (space permitting), e-tips, web-site	Individual Agents	Jan '06 Apr 06 July 06 Oct 06 Also 2007, 2008
1.3	Develop one page marketing checklist (internal and external) for calendar, newsletter, web, media, e-tips, etc.	Better participation, better marketing of program	Amy-Lynn , Leah, Toby, Donna	Feb. 06
1.4	Explore placement of E.S.G. segments or show on NPR station statewide or other statewide station.	State-wide presence	Leah	Jan 06
1.5	Explore developing standardized marketing pieces (dependent on county computer systems).	Templates to be used by all agents for E.S.G. Programs including brand names, educational publications, displays, newsletters, e-tips, E. S. G. Tips on TV shows, news columns, learning centers, E. S. G. Tips on Radio, seminars/workshops, flier shells, website,	??	??

Goal 2: Secure the endorsement and support of Cooperative Extension Administration for "Extension's Successful Gardener" to be the official brand for all consumer horticulture programming and activities				
2006 Priority Goal/Strategies				
2.1 Strategy: Increase the number of participating counties by 30 counties (150%) by January 2007				
Action Steps	Expected Outputs	Expected Outcomes	Person(s) Responsible	Time Line
Define participation benefits as free with a fee for newsletter	Checklist of free benefits (use of name, use of logo, # of free publication copies, access to pre-packaged programs & evaluation tools), Marketing package for agents explaining program resources and benefits	Participation in E.S.G. is more appealing to all counties Increased participation by counties	Kevin Starr , Don Breedlove, Mark Blevins, Mike Wilder, Bob Edwards	Jan-06
Develop guidelines for use of E.S.G. brand/materials	Guidelines document (How big logo should be, how and when it can be used, etc.)	Consistent use of brand & materials by all participants	Leah Chester-Davis Sarah Ivy, Natalie Hampton, Paul McKenzie, Tom Melton, Linda Blue, Donald Cobb, Greg Miller	Jan-06
Send invitation and marketing package to all counties	Invitation Marketing package	Increase in number of participating counties by 150% by January, 2007 (30 counties)	Kevin Starr , Don Breedlove, Mark Blevins, Mike Wilder	Feb-06
Determine fee for receiving newsletter	Set a fee that covers costs	Expenses are covered and price is fair	Leah Chester-Davis Sarah Ivy, Natalie Hampton, Paul McKenzie, Tom Melton, Linda Blue, Donald Cobb, Greg Miller	Jan-06
Note: The Committee also discussed the possibility that a fee could be charged for certain optional program materials such as flyer shells, banners, etc.				

Goal 2- Continued:

Secure the endorsement and support of Cooperative Extension Administration for "Extension's Successful Gardener" to be the official brand for all consumer horticulture programming and activities.

	Strategies	Expected Results	Person(s) Responsible	Time Line
2.2	Determine how many counties would participate in E.S.G. if funding came from outside sources	Identify number of counties supporting Successful Gardener	District distribution Appendix I	March '06
2.3	E.S.G. team members who are on Urban Horticulture Task Force will advocate for E.S.G. as statewide brand	More support of Successful Gardener	Karen Neill and Fred Miller	Jan '06
2.4	Present "White Paper" to County Operations Team (C.O.T.) proposing E.S.G. as statewide brand for consumer horticulture	More support of E.S.G.	Paul McKenzie, Leah Chester-Davis, Keith Baldwin, Karen Neill	Mar 06

Goal 3: Improve and Increase ESG Programs By Incorporating Innovative Technology and Collaboration					
2006 Priority Goal/Strategies					
3.1 Strategy: Develop packaged programs and redesign and update old publications					
Action Steps	Expected Outputs	Expected Outcomes	Resources Needed	Person(s) Responsible	Time Line
Food Production/ Healthy Eating	"Be Healthy - Grow What You Eat" brochure, fruit production & management PowerPoint, "Kids Eating Healthy", community gardens information, media kits	Health conscious people More family gardens Knowledge gained More community gardens	Support from FCS & 4-H (Carolyn Dunn, Successful Family), University Support, A&T Community Garden Program information, trained volunteer/agent base	Amy-Lynn Albertson , Keith Baldwin, Emily Revels, Karen Neill, Carolyn Dunn, Darrell Blackwelder, Aaron Lancaster, Leah Chester-Davis	Jun 06
Trees	"Tree Planting Guide," PowerPoint on proper planting, kid's tree coloring page with facts, value of trees brochure, hiring arborists handout, media kits	Proper tree selection Proper tree planting Increased tree canopy	Partner with arborist information from Arbor Day Foundation, trained volunteer/agent base	Shawn Banks , Mark Blevins, Robert Bardon, Renee Strnad, David Barkley, Diane Ashburn	Jun-06
Water Quality / Water Conservation	Brochures, PowerPoint, media packet, demonstration sites (public and private), media kits	Increased social and community involvement related to water quality Dollars saved	Partner with water companies, county storm water education programs, trained volunteer/agent base	Carl Matyac , A&T Rep, Tony Gallegos, Karen Neill, Mitch Woodward, Wendy Hartup	Jun-06
Consumer Pesticide Safety	Brochures, PowerPoint, media packet, educational program, integrated pest management (IPM), certification program	Reduction in pesticide misuse Master Gardener hotline survey Increased consumer knowledge Increase retail knowledge	Retail partners, trained agent/volunteer base, information from emergency room	Toby Bost , Emily Revels, Donna Teasley, Stephen Greer, Aaron Lancaster, Brenda Morris, Mark Danieleley, Bob Williamson	Jun-06

Goal 3- Continued:

Improve and increase Extension's Successful Gardener Programs by incorporating innovative technology and collaboration.

	Strategies	Expected Results	Person(s) Responsible	Time Line
3.1	Develop packaged programs and redesign and update old publications	10 prepackaged and 15 old publications redesigned 1. Food production 2. Trees 3. Water quality/water conservation 4. Pesticide safety (consumer) 5. Landscaping 6. Landscape maintenance 7. Value of soil management 8. Lawns (cold season, warm season, sod. Proper management – insect and disease 9. Insects (environmentally friendly pest management, etc. 10. Kids gardening	See 2006 priority list above for 2006 teams	2008
3.2	Expand and promote web presence	Better utilization of web-site, increased hits, electronic newsletter, question and answer site	Web-master, agents, specialist, Communication Services Dept.	Jan 07
3.3	Develop and coordinate E.S.G. program offerings Statewide.	Expanded audience beyond current base of 4 Garden shows, seminars, workshops, 5 special exhibits/fairs, distant learning	All agents, E.S.G. Team, Specialist ???	June 06
3.4	Implement improvements from evaluation and feedback	Better programming, more support from universities, increased funding, county participation	All agents, E.S.G. Evaluation Team, Specialist ??	March 06
3.5	Integrate E.S.G. with other subject matter areas	Comprehensive program that addresses broad community issues	E.S. G. Team, Extension Specialist and other agents/staff members, Food Prod. Team	June 06

4 Goal:

Develop effective evaluation tools for all aspects of “Extension’s Successful Gardener” program.

	Strategies	Expected Results	Person(s) Responsible	Time Line
4.1	Develop survey for E.S.G. Learning Centers to collect quantitative & qualitative data allowing impact assessment on a statewide level.	Generate quantitative and qualitative data	Raleigh Home Show Team	Mar '06
4.2	Develop e-mail survey for use with e-mail addresses collected at all Home & Garden Shows.	Generate quantitative and qualitative data	E.S.G. Evaluation Team: Stephen Greer, Don Breedlove, Carl Matyac, Karen Neill, Emily Revels and Paul McKenzie	Jan. 06
4.3	Develop e-mail survey for current E-Tip subscribers.	Generate quantitative and qualitative data	E.S.G. Evaluation Team	May 06
4.5	Develop survey to send to individual E.S.G. Subscribers.	Generate quantitative and qualitative data	E.S.G. Evaluation Team	Apr 06
4.6	Develop survey for garden centers/ vendors	Generate quantitative and qualitative data	E.S.G. Evaluation Team	Apr 06

5 Goal:
Identify and secure resources and funding to sustain and expand Successful Gardener statewide.

	Strategies	Expected Results	Person(s) Responsible	Time Line
5.1	Develop budget for Successful Gardener program.	Annual budget of expenditures	Tom, Leah	?
5.2	E.S.G. Team brainstorms and identifies potential donors.	Completed list of potential donors	E.S.G. Team, Fred	Jan 06
5.3	Develop proposals for securing funds.	Packaged proposals for each component of program	Leah & others as needed	Nov/Dec 05
5.4	Identifying specific partners for each aspect of program	???	E.S.G. Team	TBD at Jan 06 mtg.
5.5	Discussion with potential donors.	???	Identify Team for each donor	TBD "
5.6	Examine/Experiment with cost recovery for E.S.G. Programs.	???	Volunteer Team (to be determined)	TBD "
5.7	Revise budget & program design based on actual funding.	New actual budget at beginning of defined fiscal year.	E.S.G. Team	TBD "

External Trends, Issues, and Forces Impacting Consumer Horticulture Program

Positive (Top 3-5 per group)

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Urban growth	Horticulture is hot	Customer relations	Accountability
Internet	Changing technology	People willing to pay for information	Technology
Demand for horticulture information continues to increase	Growing population	Increased environmental concern	Diversity
	Need for environmental knowledge		Growing interests in gardening

Negative (Top 3-5 per group)

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Lack of funding	Budget	Budget	Lack of knowledge
Competitors using high quality mass media advertising	Time	Competition	Budget
Lack of time	Competition of sources		Time management

Customers and Partners

Customers

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Volunteers (M.G.)	Public	Public	General Public (different cultures, ages, lifestyles, etc)
Homeowners, Public	Green Industry	Youth	Green Industry (landscapers, nurseries, etc.)
Youth	Mass Media	Green Industry	Master Gardeners
		Government Agencies (park and rec., etc.)	Youth

Partners

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Green Industry	Green Industry	Garden Centers	Green Industry
Mass Media	Volunteers	Volunteers	Government
	County Leaders	Schools	Mass Media
	Media	Media	

Needs and Expectations of Primary Customers

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Volunteers	Media	Youth	Master Gardeners
	Information		Advanced information
Training, Gardening Information	New Ideas	Hands-on learning experiences	High quality resources
Training Hours	Quick Sound Bites	Basic Knowledge	Timely information
Up-to-date information		FUN	Training opportunities
General Public	General Public	General Public	General Public
Quick, accurate information from a living being		Problem solving	
Easy to understand	Information NOW	Rapid response	Consistent information available
Real people answering phone	Personal Contact	Cheap/Free information	Immediate response
Correct information	Up to Date Information	Easy to use	
Green Industry	Green Industry	Green Industry	Green Industry
Accurate Information	Information NOW	Advice	Problem solving
Pesticide Credits	Certification	Pesticide Credits	Training and certification
Marketing Information	Marketing Information	Programs for the public	Quality information and resources
	Back-up for recourses	Long Term Training	
		Government	
		Money saving tips	
		Problem solving	
		Free consultations	

What Is Working Well

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Master Gardener Program	E.S.G. Team Concept	Master Gardeners	E.S.G. Team Approach
Green Industry Certifications	Cooperation of the brand as a whole	Answering phones	Writing
	Volunteers	News Media	Seminars
	Media	Columns	Shows
		Newsletters	High Quality Production
		Successful Gardener Concept	Sponsors for Newsletters

What Is Working Less Than Well

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Hispanic Groups, other special audiences	University support	Time management	Increase promotion
On-line newsletters	Limited growth	University support	New trends and products
Support from the University (for the most part)	Hard to get information out of people	Program visibility	Presence of University personnel
			Sponsors for Newsletter

Priorities for Next Three Years

Marketing

- One Brand

Audience

- Expand Customer Base
- Reaching More Diverse Audience

Support

- Partnerships
- Strengthen & Maintain Support
- University

Quality Assurance

- Strive to Continually Improve
- Fix the System
- Consistent Evaluation & Measurement System

Program Needs

- Certifications
- Develop Basic Curriculum
- Curriculum Standardization

Delivery Systems

- Explore Innovative Delivery Methods
- Technology Usage
- Active Participation in all 100 Counties

Funding

- Develop Sustainable Financial Support

Characteristics of an Ideal Program in 3-5 Years

Team

- Multidisciplinary
- Remove County Boundaries
- Freedom to Specialize
- Training Needs
- Specialized Staff

Attitude/Behavior/Skills/Traits

- Good Morale
- Enthusiastic
- Highly Motivated
- Dedicated
- Ability to Address Issues
- Quick Response
- Realistic Expectations
- Competent Team Members
- Responsive

Recognition

- Sense of worth – Importance
- Adequate Rewards for Performance
- High Impacts

Funding

- Sponsors, Fees, Legislature, Grants
- Program Support Materials

Market/Audience

- Household
- Total Saturation
 - Media
 - Internet
 - Face-to-face
 - Workshops

Programming

- Aligned with County & State Needs
- Responsive to Environmental Needs
- Highly Relevant

Appendix I

Internal Marketing Assignments:

Group	Person(s) Responsible
Commodity Team-Urban Horticulture	Fred Miller, Karen Neill, Tom Melton
CORE Team–Sept.15	Cheryl Lloyd, Stephen Greer,
POW 15	Karen Neill, Erv Evans, David ?, Emily Revels
COT Program	???
Program Action Team	Keith Baldwin, Tom Melton
Department of Horticulture	Paul McKenzie, Kevin Starr, Carl Matyac
District CED Mtg.- North Central	Cheryl Lloyd, Paul McKenzie
District CED Mtg.- West	Diane Ashburn, Linda Blue
District CED Mtg.-Northeast	Will be discussed at the Oct. 14 Meeting
District CED Mtg.-Northwest	Amy-Lynn Albertson, Karen Neill
District CED Mtg.-Southwest	Kevin Starr, Mark Blevins, Fred Miller
District CED Mtg.-Southeast	Will be discussed at the Oct. 14 Meeting
District CED Mtg.-South Central	Will be discussed at the Oct. 14 Meeting

Appendix II

SUCCESSFUL GARDENER COUNTY SURVEYS

What is working well?

- Variety of information provided in each issue
- Reminder of things that might otherwise be forgotten
- Reminder of what should/could be done in your garden
- Snippets are just long enough for quick read and contain enough information to either inform or encourage further research
- Featured plant photos – excellent quality
- Coordination
- Follow-through by Extension people involved
- Publicity through newsletter
- Execution on-site by Extension professionals
- Master Gardeners- Great
- Short demos – Good
- Newsletter and E-Tips are beautiful, professionally done and reflect well on Extension while providing solid research-based information to clientele.
- Workshops and shows provide excellent visibility for Extension with non-traditional audiences.
- Brief, compact, concise.
- Layout is excellent and eye appealing
- Good contact points for retailers to customers – provides a way to start up conversations with the customer.
- Good refresher/reminder of what needs to be done.
- Unbiased – No vested interests in selling a certain product
- Very informative
- Monthly reminders are helpful
- Nice to get free Internet version
- Seasonal appropriate topics
- Eye catching front page
- Variety of information in a short space
- Good use of color
- “Monthly Calendar” best feature

What is not working well?

- Local newsletter preferred – newsletter is duplication of County Newsletter, Garden Centers don't want to spend money when they do on-line newsletter
- Very basic – not enough information to teach much
- Limited circulation
- Don't know how to get e-tips
- Need more articles from various regions of the state.
- Not enough focus on native trees as well as plants in each issue.

How can it be improved?

- More environmental education
- How to protect with chemicals
- Practical tips
- 3-Hole-Punch newsletter
- Look at presentation topics and think about what will get the media interest and the public's attention. Work ahead with local garden and home writers to create stories around the presentation – real-life projects using the concepts and principles covered in the seminars.
- Work with nurseries or nursery groups to bring live plants on-stage. Hot weather plants seminar, for instance.
- Organization-wide support and availability in all counties so that it could be promoted more broadly.
- Involvement of the Department of Horticultural Science
- More bite-size pieces of information that is fast and easy to comprehend
- Latest information on the trends in gardening – makes us look good and helps the vendor with their customers, e.g. 'endless summer' hydrangea
- Help on selling products that are offered – talk about the merits of the products
- Topic Ideas:
 - How to care for southern warm season grasses
 - Easy to care for, hard to kill plants
 - Low maintenance landscaping ideas
 - Managing planting mediums or small strips in parks and neighborhoods
 - Insect and disease pests
 - What is new in pest control
 - New plants – what's coming out
 - Have a "list" section each time suggesting what to take care of at that time during the year.
 - More articles from around the state
 - Include both basic AND advanced information for home gardeners
 - Rate products of interest to gardeners
 - Use humor whenever possible
 - Suggestions for what to do with certain 'seasonal' problems (i.e. Japanese Beetles).
 - Featured gardens or points of interest