



Association of Natural Resources
Extension Professionals

Natural Resources Extension Programs and Impacts

Sustainable Living

Junior Master Gardeners Promote Self-sufficiency and Healthy Habits in Colorado – The nearest large-scale grocer to Cripple Creek, Colorado is 25 miles away. Rising gas prices sparked community-wide interest in learning to grow food. Teller County Extension and Colorado State University started



a Junior Master Gardener (JMG) program using a city-owned greenhouse for high altitude vegetable production. The Cripple Creek GreenHousers JMG program started in 2008 with 33 youth learning about soils, water, and compost and planting tomatoes, peppers, cilantro, and other vegetables. Residents from the Cripple Creek Rehab and Wellness Center helped students maintain the plots. Members also took field trips to explore native plants and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, and to sample vegetables grown by local gardeners. Over 120 Teller County youth have received JMG certification. **Contact:** Mark Platten, Teller County Director, Colorado State University Extension; phone: 719-686-7961; email: mark.platten@colostate.edu.

Floridians Reduce Air Conditioning Energy Use and Cost – Air conditioning is used 5 to 7 months of the year in Florida with 50% of home energy costs going for cooling and heating. Trees are natural ‘air conditioners’ which can reduce the temperature around homes between 9 and 26 degrees, thereby reducing A/C costs. At the University of Florida Nassau County Demonstration Garden, Master Gardener volunteers totally altered the site’s heat index by adding more than twenty five trees and many more shrubs and perennials. This garden serves as an example to thousands of government employees and visitors each year how easily electric bills can be reduced while providing a haven for native wildlife. **Contact:** Rebecca L. Jordi, County Extension Director, Nassau County Extension Office, University of Florida; phone: 904-491-7340; email: rljordi@ufl.edu.



Native Plant Masters Grow in Colorado – Colorado’s growing population increases demand for water. Urban gardens and landscapes often use non-native plants with high water needs. Native plants offer a sustainable alternative. Colorado State

University Extension created the Native Plant Master (NPM) program to educate people about how native plants can be used to create sustainable landscapes and the threats to native ecosystems from invasive weeds. NPM volunteers help the public understand the benefits of native plants. To earn certification in the volunteer program, participants take 36 to 38 hours of hands-on coursework and agree to make at least 60 educational contacts. A 2010 statewide survey of NPM participants showed that nearly all increased their native and non-native plant identification skills, increased their awareness of the impact of alien weeds and the importance of controlling them, and increased awareness of the value of native plants for sustainable landscaping. Participants increased planting of natives was done on over 150,000 acres of public and private land. By reducing water use and other landscaping costs and improving land productivity through weed removal the economic impact of these efforts totaled over \$1.2 million. Almost a third of the respondents reported getting a new job or retaining their current job as a result of participating in the program. **Contact:** Barbara Fahey, Natural Resources Agent, Colorado State University Extension; phone: 970-271-6620; email: bfahey@jeffco.us.



removal of four thousand cars from the road for a year, air pollution reduction equivalent to five thousand acres of forest, and reduction of 24 thousand tons of CO2 emissions. **Contact:** Ramona Madhosingh-Hector, Urban Sustainability Agent, Pinellas County Florida Extension Services, University of Florida; phone: 727-582-2656; email: rmadhosingh-hector@pinellascounty.org.

Learning to Compost in the Midwest – The Midwest Compost School has been held since 1995 by Extension educators from Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Texas to train mid- to large-scale composting operators in processes, regulations, and marketing.

Florida Program Saves Energy and Money –

University of Florida Extension developed a Community Energy Education Program that taught energy efficiency in Pinellas County, where most homes are not energy efficient and heating and cooling bills can be huge. The program led to an overall reduction in community energy demand, reaching over 17,000 people and providing 70,000 compact fluorescent light bulbs. This represented a savings of \$5 million in energy costs, reduction of energy use by 35 million kWh, air pollution savings equivalent to the re-

The 2011 workshop was held in Illinois by University of Illinois Extension and other partners. Thirty seven professionals learned the importance of monitoring temperatures, CO2, and moisture to make higher quality compost; recipe development; how feedstocks batch chemistry; process complexity; how to troubleshoot and correct problems; and how to create high value compost without odors. **Contact:** Duane Friend, Environmental Stewardship and Energy Educator, University of Illinois Extension; phone: 217-243-7424; email: friend@illinois.edu.

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