

IMPACT

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Extension

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Fort Hall gardening program improves the community

The Situation

In 2012, Fort Hall Extension, Tribal members, and departments determined there was a need to make our gardening program more useful and engaging. Tribal members expressed an interest in *actually* learning how to grow their own food, plant trees, and beautify their community. They wanted to increase their knowledge regarding how and where their food was produced. In addition, the Fort Hall Festival Grounds, which is used extensively throughout the year, was in need of a tree windbreak to provide wind and sun protection for community events.

A big challenge in adult education is that listening to a presentation does not help people gain the knowledge and skills necessary to apply principles taught in their lives. Many people learn and retain more knowledge and skills if classes include a hands-on component. This teaching method helps many people gain the confidence and initiative needed to plant their own lawn, garden, and/or tree at home.

Another big challenge in Fort Hall is the actual establishment and management of plants in the prevalent sandy soils found on the reservation can be difficult. Sandy soils require different management strategies to establish and maintain healthy gardens, lawns and trees as compared to silt and clay-based soils. Our programming had to address this situation to ensure planting projects were successful.

After assessing these needs, we chose to increase participant knowledge and skills by providing results-based education. To accomplish this goal, hands-on projects were developed and implemented as part of the program.



Fort Hall Extension gardening group and community members planting a tree windbreak for the Fort Hall Festival Grounds.

Our Response

Extension educator Danielle Gunn, Tribal 4-H Program Director, Nola Cates, and Fort Hall Housing Authority staff collaborated with local University of Idaho Extension educators and experts to develop and deliver hands-on gardening, lawn, and tree programming that would teach skills to Tribal members. Our goal was to teach people the new knowledge and skills they needed to grow and maintain their own gardens, lawns, and trees. We taught 30-45 minute PowerPoint presentations followed by an hour of hands-on activities. We taught management techniques to better manage plants in sandy soils through more frequent watering and proper application methods. To make the program more effective, it was designed to be "family friendly." This allowed parents and grandparents to bring children to the activities. This format also helped youth get involved in horticulture. In addition, the Fort Hall Housing Authority sponsored a dinner for each class. This type of

programming cannot be beat! This format was extremely productive and successful. Our 2012 classes taught people how to plant trees, vegetables, strawberries and flowers, and make healthy jam. Out of five classes conducted, participation ranged from 25-30 participants.

Program Outcomes

Through these collaborative efforts, Extension programming had an amazing impact on individuals and the community! Calls regarding gardening and lawn care increased at the Extension office, and more gardens and trees were planted. Comments regarding the program included, "Good job with this year's class, I learned a lot!" "You provide great classes and handouts, the slides and hands-on examples were valuable." "I went home and planted a garden!" Our outcomes included people planting a 2-row windbreak with hybrid poplars and native juniper and chokecherry trees, planting and building a raised garden bed for community use, making 25 containers of healthy jam, planting 25 outdoor floral pots for home beautification, and planting 25 strawberry plants to increase interest in gardening and healthy eating. Fifteen out of 25 participants completed surveys to evaluate program impact. All class participants rated the class as excellent. Eighty percent indicated they increased their knowledge of horticulture. All 80% surveyed stated they had gone home and planted a garden or even just a plant!

Four main outcomes have resulted from this program:

- Individuals were educated and taught actual skills regarding planting gardens, lawns, and trees.
- Individuals became enthused and confident in their abilities so they applied what they learned in class at home.
- Fort Hall now has a beautiful windbreak for wind and sun protection and a raised garden bed for growing food.
- The community learned how to work together to build projects and accomplish goals.

The Future

UI Fort Hall Extension will continue developing gardening courses that will teach people "how" to do things. One main objective will be to teach skills and build confidence. This ensures our programming is utilized at home to improve the lives of our clientele through our effective educational programming. The 2013 Fort Hall Extension Gardening Program is planned. We cannot wait to see the additional results and impacts this programming will create in our community!

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Shoshone-Bannock 4-H Program
Fort Hall Housing Authority
Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Agricultural
Resource Management

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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