

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Homeowners learn winterization techniques for their landscape

AT A GLANCE

A community development course on winterizing the landscape empowered homeowners to prepare their yards for the big chill of winter.

The Situation

Freezing temperatures in Idaho are a yearly occurrence. All residents, animals and plants alike, who make their lives in this glorious county, must learn to deal with a cold environment. Plant communities feel the effects of cold temperatures long before people realize winter is coming. Residents in east Idaho have selected plants that can survive over the winter through a process called hardening-off, which is a gradual change from vibrant growth to dormancy. These changes occur as the plants receive environmental signals such as a decrease in daylight and cooling temperatures. Even though all the plants in a landscape enter dormancy, there are things that can be done to ensure survivability during winter months.

Our Response

Madison County's Extension educator developed an educational program to address county concerns about how to prepare yards and gardens for winter's freezing temperatures. The class was organized to address winterizing lawns, trees, shrubs and irrigation systems as well as annual winter weeds in the landscape. Participants learned strategies to enhance their ability to prepare their properties for winter's dormant season. The participants were surveyed to measure the increase in



Madison County courthouse landscape during winter. Photo by Jonathon Hogge.

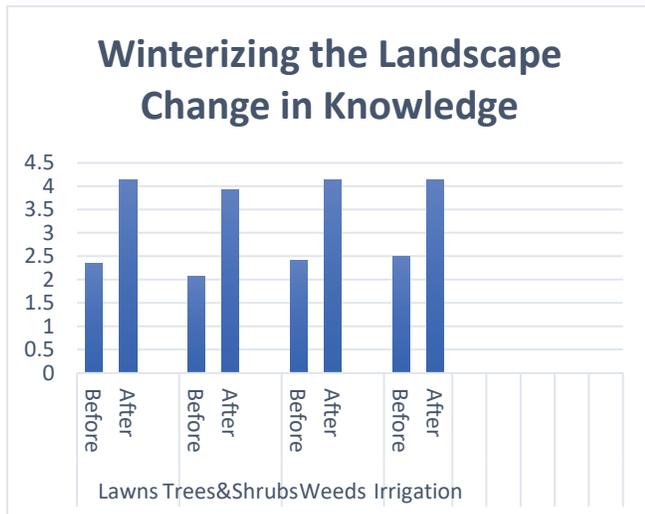
knowledge gained after attending the course. Surveys included a request for participant needs for further training on yards and gardens. Handouts and links to webpages were provided to participants to deliver more resources and education to help participants prepare their lawns and gardens for winter. Information about the regional master gardener programs and horticulture programs offered by the University of Idaho Extension and held in Rexburg was shared with the participants.

Program Outcomes

There were 22 participants from Madison County that attended the educational program. A total of 14 evaluations were received from participants who attended the program. A pre- and post-survey was

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used to assess the participant's knowledge of class topics before and immediately after the program. A zero to five point scale with zero indicating no knowledge and five indicating complete knowledge was used. Survey responses were statistically analyzed. The table below shows that participants increased their knowledge about each of the topics discussed.



Participants were asked if they planned to change any current practice and apply any new skills they learned from the training; their responses were as follows:

- I learned the proper way to use dormant oil on my fruit trees.
- I learned how to control my annual winter weeds.
- I learned what time of year to apply fertilizer.
- I learned what type of fertilizer to apply.

The Future

Participants were asked which topic areas they would like to learn more about in future trainings. The most sought-after information was to learn about insect and pest management, care of conifers in the landscape and identifying tree diseases. University of Idaho Extension educators are preparing to offer programs related to the topics of interest from the participants and other landscape educational programs in the future.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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