

Sandoval Extension Master Gardener Program

Situation

Due to the pandemic, the County Extension office was closed to the public with staff working remotely from home starting March 12, 2020. From March to September 30, most Master Gardener activities were suspended. Volunteers working in demonstration and donation gardens resumed activities following the NMDOH protocols of social distancing and face masks when restrictions were loosened. A resurgence of home food gardens resulted from initial shortages of goods at grocery stores, people working remotely from home, and a need to be proactive in the face of the pandemic.

Extension's Response

As a result, Master Gardener volunteers and the Agent responded to over 684 gardening questions by phone and email. In April alone, the volume of gardening questions increased by 1,740% from April of 2019. The Sandoval Extension Master Gardener website that posts events and gardening information, received 38,341 visitors. Website visitors increased by 11% in April and 48% from March to the end of September during the pandemic. Demonstration gardens were maintained in Placitas, Rio Rancho, and Corrales with new installments at the Corrales public library funded in part by a grant from Intel.



IMPACT

- Twenty-seven new Master Gardeners trained
- Eighty-three Master Gardeners contributed over 5,349 hours, valued at \$145,493 (Independent Sector July 2020, \$27.20/hour), equivalent to 3 full time staff at a gross salary of \$45,000.
- School programs and community events reached over 1,582 youth
- Delivered 14 gardening classes with 291 participants: 91% of attendees rated classes as very good to excellent, 93% said they would put the information to use, and 91% reported a high to very high level of knowledge gained



Participant Feedback

"I've been amazed by all the resources available through the Master Gardeners. I really love the outreach part of the program. Giving back to the community is very important to me."

"The NMSU instructors were great. They were also very responsive to emails asking questions on their subjects."

"I have a bee habitat project I'm working on and I got everything I needed from NMSU."

Contact: SEMG Outreach
email: outreach@sandovalmastergardeners.org
or visit: www.sandovalmastergardeners.org



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