

HORTICULTURE COMMUNICATION STATEWIDE PLAN



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PROJECT INTRODUCTION

- Colorado gardening and landscaping is difficult due to our unique soils and rapid weather changes.
- These conditions leave many home gardeners with little to no information on how to protect their plants and make evidence-based decisions.
- CSU Extension a wide variety of resources (Blog, factsheets, social media, county websites, online courses, etc.) but, sometimes we get caught off guard with which information to share in a timely matter.
- **This project's main goals are to help build a seasonal communication plan including recommendations on proposed resources, channels and timing.**

INTERNSHIP GOALS

- **Build a Communications plan and Calendar** for disseminating horticulture information
- **Attend outreach events** to practice sharing horticulture resources to and identify resource preferences of the general public
- **Share best practices** for effective communication of horticulture resources to county educators

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR EDUCATION

- **Practical Applications of Theory**
 - Communication theory in practice to better understand it
- **Communication measurements**
 - Empirical evidence showcasing best methods and strategies
- **Outreach events**
 - Better communicating ideas and practices with others
- **Planning Tools**
 - Thesis soon! Long term projects and building complex strategies

WHAT YOU DID

- Created a **calendar with relevant links** to help county educators and social media content creators
- Created **broad communication plan with key messages, measurement of communication output, and recommendations for success**
- Attended **outreach events**; Larimer County Farmer's market, CSU Tree Walk, Trial Garden events, and Horticulture Green Industry Field day at the CSU Trial Gardens

FIGURES



Figure 1. Larimer County Farmer's Market; located in Old Town Fort Collins, this is one of many farmers markets in Larimer county. One cool thing that they do here is that faculty and volunteers to help answer gardening questions!



Figure 2. Trial Gardens Industry Day; The CSU Trial Gardens is a way for the university to evaluate which plants thrive in Colorado. There is also a public day where the public can choose their favorite plants!

WHAT YOU LEARNED

- How to effectively plan out **communication on social media**
- How to build a plan to **guide widespread communication**
- How to measure the **effectiveness of messaging and communication**
- **How to project plan** and how to effectively build something from the ground up
- **Plants! And Colorado Climate!**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Website

- **Collect all relevant horticulture information into one website** with easy to read and understand information
- **Simplify the information flow on the websites** (maybe clearer categories, pictures, or more embedded videos)
- Create a place where **counties can showcase what newsletters** their residents can sign up for
- Organize website with **more pictures** so it's easier to navigate

Easier for County Faculty

- Information on **who runs each social media account**
- Information on **local relationships** each county has (for planning purposes)
- **Pool resources for faculty** to use and reuse (maybe in some kind of internal database so everyone can access it)
- **Highlight what happens on the county level** – a lot of counties do cool events and programming that can and should be shared with others when possible