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EXTENSION SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

2021 IMPACT REPORT

MAY



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AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mike Ballweg, Agriculture Agent

Virtual 2021 Landscape & Grounds Maintenance Short Course Very Successful

Covid-19 restrictions limited in-person educational programs this past winter. As a result, the **2021 Landscape and Ground Maintenance Short Course** was held virtually. The virtual format allowed us to easily utilize horticultural specialists from other universities across the upper Midwest and Northeast. The goal of the 4-week short course is to provide research updates allowing Green Industry professionals the opportunity to improve the quality of service and profitability of their horticultural businesses.



Approximately 400 attended the virtual short course this year, of which nearly 100 registered at the Extension Sheboygan County website. This long-standing short course is the collaborative outcome of Extension faculty and staff in Sheboygan, Waukesha, Racine & Kenosha, and Dane counties. Continuing education (CEUs) were available for certified arborists and members of the National Association of Landscape Professionals.

Evaluation results:

- Participants were asked, To what extent were you able to use what you learned during the short course to implement landscape changes or make recommendations to others? Sixty-eight percent (68%) indicated either "a great deal" or "a lot" and 25% indicated "a moderate amount."
- Where the addition of more out-of-state speakers valuable? Eighty-four percent (84%) of the survey respondents indicated that the addition of more speakers from outside Wisconsin was "very valuable" or "somewhat valuable." The virtual format makes this affordable.
- Fifty-two percent (52%) indicated that the virtual online delivery was their preference for future classes, while 33% indicated in-person sessions as their preference; only 16% indicated that they preferred a combination of online and in-person sessions.

Speakers for the 2021 Landscape & Grounds Maintenance Short Course included:

Jeff Iles, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of the Department of Horticulture, Iowa State University
Chad Giblin, Arborist and Owner, Trees & Me, St Paul, MN
Nina Lauren Bassuk, Ph.D., Professor, Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Doug Soldat, Ph.D., Professor, UW-Madison
Brian Hudelson, Ph.D., Director, Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic, UW-Madison Extension
Paul Koch, Ph.D., Turfgrass Specialist, UW-Madison
PJ Liesch, Entomologist, UW-Madison Extension
Kevin Roethle, Sale Representative, Ball Seed Company, West Chicago, IL

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4-H POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Sarah Tarjeson, 4-H Youth Development Educator

Parents want the best opportunities for their children. They want them to have whatever it takes to be happy and successful—good health, ability to get along with others, thinking and problem solving skills, a good self-concept. Children need resiliency skills: self-esteem, life skills, self-reliance, and pro-social behaviors. The camp experience offers a nurturing environment away from the distractions of the city or home. Peter Scales, Ph.D., a noted educator, author, and psychologist with the Search Institute in Minneapolis says, "Camp is one of the few institutions where young people can experience and satisfy their need for physical activity, creative expression and true participation in a community environment. Most schools don't satisfy all these needs."

The Sheboygan County 4-H Program facilitates a strong and comprehensive camping program. With a camp staff training program for high school youth, a four-day overnight camp for youth in grades 3-7, a Cloverbud Day Camp for youth in grades K-3, and an Adventure Camp for youth in grades 7-10, there are opportunities for all. **This year, we expect over 100 youth to participate in one or more 4-H Camps.** Significant time and resources are devoted to the camping program to ensure a positive youth development experience. Our philosophy and goals for 4-H Camp are focused on three audiences: the camper (grades 3-7), youth staff (grades 9-13), and adult staff (certified 4-H volunteer leaders).

Eighty youth grades 3-7 will enjoy their four-day camping experience August 9-12, 2021 at Camp Rokilio. It will be an exciting week of growth and learning for the campers and staff. The responsibility and independence that come from an overnight experience, the belonging to a greater camp community, the opportunities to give back by helping with meals and cabin clean-up, and the chance to learn and practice project skills are major parts of this year's 4-H camp.

Prior to and throughout camp, 20 older youth and 11 adult staff develop leadership and life skills that help them plan and teach activities. All participants attend sessions in recreation, nature, canoeing, team building, arts and crafts, and more, learning new skills and making new friends. Campers often report that they learned problem solving skills and gained confidence in more effectively expressing and asserting themselves. Older youth are responsible for planning all camp activities and are responsible for the youth in their cabins. Adult staff serve as resources for the youth staff, providing advice and support when needed, and Sarah Tarjeson provides the training, leadership, and overall direction for the camp.

Along with the traditional camping experience, 20 youth grades 7 and older participate in the 4-H Outpost Camp 2021. Under Sarah's leadership and direction, participants will hike, cook, swim and practice mindfulness outdoors at Wyalusing State Park in Bagley, WI.





Veggie Bites

Veggie Bites are a series of highlighted fruits, vegetables, and herbs featured weekly throughout the Wisconsin growing season. Each publication includes fun facts, history, harvest/selection, storage tips, and a healthy recipe. The Veggie Bites publications began in Polk County Extension with a few publications. Amanda Miller, with help from Cassi Worster, has redesigned and expanded the publication series.

Veggie Bites are for everyone, but some of the most popular settings include: farmers markets and produce vendors, food pantries, and food assistance programs (WIC, FoodShare). Veggie Bites are available in hard copy, on social media, and digitally at: <https://fonddulac.extension.wisc.edu/veggie-bites/>

Amanda has been offering Veggie Bites for more than 6 years, building an extensive collection of publications from A (asparagus) to Z (zucchini)!



Along with a team of Human Development & Relationships Educators working in the Life Span area, Jane co-developed and co-facilitated a four-part virtual series continuing to focus on lessening isolation and increasing social connections. The series was created to build on the success of the Winter Series. The Wise Wisconsin Spring Series was facilitated on four Wednesdays in April 2021. The sessions focused on: learning the skills and techniques of compassion resilience for others and ourselves as we learn to connect to others in challenging times; what to keep in terms of important documents and distribution of non-titled property as well as developing connection and belonging through family history; and so much more.

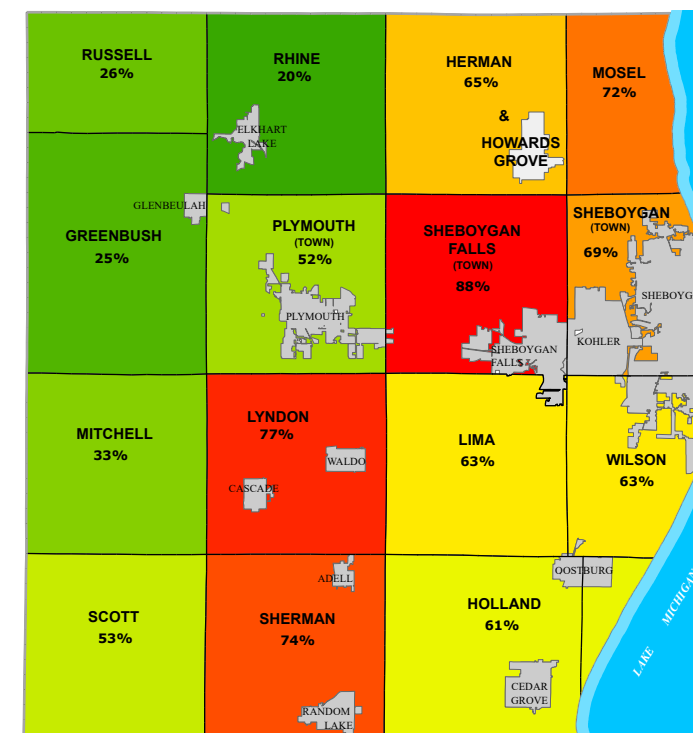
There was an average of almost 70 participants per session. Over 90% indicated that they would use at least one new skill or tool learned during each session. Almost 80% said that attending this session helped them feel more connected to other people. Between 90% and 100% of the participants agreed that they became more aware of the research-based resources available through Life Span Program Educators with UW-Madison Extension in their respective counties. A participant commented, "I am so appreciative of the educators continuing to provide important information virtually. This has meant a lot."



Well Water Testing in Town of Holland - RESULTS

In the April, 2021 issue of the Impact Report, Kevin described the importance of periodic well water testing and highlighted a program he had carried out in the Town of Holland. The results have since been mailed to the nearly 100 participants, and an educational session via Zoom was conducted on May 18, where participants could tune in to hear Extension Groundwater Specialist Kevin Masarik explain the data, offer helpful tips for addressing well water quality issues, and describe best practices for limiting future problems. **Overall, the quality of well water tested in the Town of Holland is relatively good.**

The results indicated that coliform bacteria was present in 8% of the 96 samples tested. "The statewide average," according to Masarik, "is approximately 15%." While only one of the 8 wells with coliform bacteria tested positive for the far more harmful E. coli bacteria, Masarik was quick to point out that, "If an organism like coliform bacteria can access a well, it shows there is a pathway for harmful pathogens to enter that water supply system." This is a major reason the Groundwater Center recommends private well owners should test their wells for bacteria about every 15 months as a way to monitor the sanitary integrity of the well water system.



Percentages, by town, of tested wells since 2007 where the presence of arsenic was detected. Of those wells, 9.5% were above the health standard.

Of the 96 wells tested for nitrate, which is a health concern for pregnant women and infants under six months of age, none (0%) exceeded the health standard. Statewide, nitrate exceeding the health standard is typically found in about 14% of wells. (Nitrate is a compound that forms when nitrogen from fertilizers, animal wastes, septic systems, or other sources combines with oxygen in water.)

Of the 79 wells tested for arsenic, 34 (43%) had a low level of arsenic and 8 (10%) exceeded the health standard. Although none had excessively high levels, the fact that over half had at least some arsenic detected certainly bears watching. In addition to occasional industrial sources, arsenic can occur naturally, at low levels in soil and bedrock. Long-term exposure to arsenic at such levels in drinking water can lead to an increased risk for certain cancers.

It should be noted that 32% of the participants had not tested their well water in at least 10 years, and another 28% did not know when the last time their water had been tested. Approximately 6% admitted to having never tested. This total (66% of participants) indicates the program reached a major need. Based on several comments from participants, the discounted prices (made possible by a Sheboygan County subsidy) and the convenience of a program at the town hall were significant factors in their decision to test their water.