

## Creating A Horticulture Paradise- 1995 to 2005

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension



Mulch applications hold soil moisture and prevent disease infection through rain splash.



Proper watering can decrease a tree's susceptibility to disease infection.



Redtwig Dogwood

Educating clientele, both urban and rural, on sustainable landscape practices and integrated pest management techniques continues to be an important component in the protection of natural resources from the runoff of excess fertilizers and the improper application of pesticides.

Participants estimated an annual savings, due to knowledge gained through this program series, ranging from \$20.00 to \$1,000.00, with an average savings per participant of \$127.00. Below are a few of the practice changes that resulted in their savings:

- By buying more disease resistant varieties
- Garden plants and flowers are watered more efficiently with soaker hoses or drip irrigation
- Installed drip irrigation and sprinkler systems. I definitely was overwatering.
- [Hundreds of dollars] saved by choosing hardier [plant] varieties. I pay close attention to [plant hardiness] zone numbers when I purchase anything!

Participants were asked what changes they made to their previous landscape management practices due to knowledge gained from this program series. A few examples are listed below:

- Learned to choose native perennials for along driveway where I don't water.
- Selecting shrub roses growing on their own rooting stock instead of grafted varieties.
- Replaced two trees with improved varieties.
- I am trying to improve our windbreak and woodlot- and got useful advice on shrub (understory) plant selection and planting methods.
- I had picked out a bush for the front of our house & then changed my mind after I found out more about it and learned of alternatives.
- [Planted] Thin bladed fescue in parkway (turf between street & sidewalk) instead of bluegrass. Less watering and tougher resistance to salt (winter) and heat (summer).
- Ordered 4 disease resistant apple trees. Learned to avoid cedar/apple rust.
- Buffalo grass on a terrace worked out well.

Finally, three participants indicated that they started a commercial horticulture enterprise due to information gained through this program series. One participant started selling cut flowers as a Farmer's Market, another began growing woody florals and the third planted a vineyard.

A series of horticulture programs have been held each spring since 1995. From 1995-2005, attendance is estimated at 4,252. Originally developed in Washington County, the program has evolved to include Burt, Cuming, Dodge and Washington counties. In 2005, participants completed an evaluation focusing on landscape management practice changes they have made due to knowledge gained through this program series, from 1995- 2005. A total of 77 evaluations were completed.



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