What are they really thinking and learning and needing?

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Plants AND People

“People and money. They are the two undeniable building blocks of any organization, and it sure seems to me that over the past few decades money is the easier one to find.” Dan Jessup
MG leadership

We may have
- slightly different methods
- slightly different systems
- taken different paths

We are linked by the mission and the people
Engaged volunteers
Our Visit Today

- Early efforts in needs assessment
- Synopsis of responses
- How we are using this info
- What comes next and how this might be useful to you??
The big picture

1. Keep experienced folks positively engaged

2. Retain those we are currently training

3. Lay the groundwork to attract and retain those we don’t know yet
Section 1

2015 SURVEY TOOL
Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program

• Began in 1986
• Early groups were selected geographically
• Later groups were started as needs arose
• Three state coordinators

• 38 local groups (single and multi-county)
• 2250 EMGs reporting
• Approximately 500 interns trained
Goals of Survey

• Assess areas of interest and perceived need
• Volunteer needs vs. resident needs
• Compare volunteer and coordinator perspectives
• Assess level of involvement locally, regionally, statewide
Survey and Methodology

• 33 Question survey (27 scaled, 6 open)

• Pulled from 3639 names in database

• 417 for main test, all coordinators

• Three week survey period (March)
Key notes

- Random from entire contact list
- Only administered by email
Please consider the items listed below. Check the box to indicate the level of importance or unimportance for planning future Master Gardener programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Relatively Unimportant</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Moderately Important</th>
<th>Highly Important</th>
<th>Don't Know/Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1. Providing education in ornamental landscape plant selection and care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2. Providing education in vegetable crop selection and care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3. Providing training through classroom instruction and hands-on experience</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 2

RESULTS AND RUBBER AND ROADS
## Inward versus outward Environ.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Environ. Stewardship</th>
<th>Landscape/Ornamental</th>
<th>Vegetables</th>
<th>Pest and disease Mgt.</th>
<th>Turfgrass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For Tenn. residents</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For future TEMG training</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is not an RCB

• People are not factorial
Simple premise

• Two essential groups involved in the program

• Do they differ in opinion?

• 14 topic areas- 6 + 4 + 4
## Horticultural Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Providing education in:</th>
<th>CC</th>
<th>EMG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable crop selection and care</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pest and disease management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ornamental landscape plant selection and care</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental aspects of soil and water management</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential turf grass management and lawn care</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small fruit selection and care</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many areas of content agreement

- More focus on diagnostics, food
- Much time invested in core intern training
We don’t always agree

• Turf

• Water and soil stewardship - better integrated with other topics
## Organizational Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Providing education in:</th>
<th>CC</th>
<th>EMG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer support and management</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching skills</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational management and leadership</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising and organizational financial management</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We may need things we don’t report we want

• In print and in person
## Methods of Teaching/Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Providing training through:</th>
<th>CC</th>
<th>EMG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom instruction and hands-on experience</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Gardener training materials (manuals, handouts)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online training modules and materials</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide and regional conferences and meetings</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Volunteers care about the content and delivery
## Open Responses (by %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response areas</th>
<th>Coordinator</th>
<th>Volunteer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs/content</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in basic requirements</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County program consistency</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational structure</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting/recordkeeping</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coordinators care about the content and the organization and the system and the delivery.
Organizational changes

• Better division between administrative and content
• Yearly coordinator meetings
• More regional planning meetings
The digital infrastructure needs work, but shhhhh, not everyone knows….

• Databases and websites…….. resilience

Image credits: Kyle Brown
## Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Connectivity is an issue

- Engagement past the local level?
- Perceptions of similarity across groups
Longer term implications

• Balancing what is needed with what is asked for

• Addressing local needs in the context of larger efforts

• The ones we haven’t met yet….
Section 3

SO, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
The big three

• What got you here?

• What keeps you here?

• Where do you think we need to go?
Delving deeper – TEMG 20:20

• Motivation

• Intern experience

• Organizational elements

• Where and who are we in 5 years?
Today’s volunteer

• Busy
• Wants flexibility
• Expects empowerment
• Wants to make a difference
Our first target audience

- Retiring boomers

A cause, professional skills, payoffs=commit, flexibly, high standards
Our second target audience

- Young professionals (after 1981)

Mission-driven, impatient, multitasking, decision making, led not managed
Second layer question formatting

• Not “what training do you want?”

• Rather “what is the question you receive most from citizens?”

• Or “what one thing would make it easier for your to volunteer?”
Similar core questions

• With a few county specific questions
Descriptors

Group size
Age of group
County population
Volunteer demographics
The big picture

1. Engage our experience
2. Keep our interns
3. Build a future for those we don’t know yet
We love plants, but we are in the people business.