

August 2009



Project Green Thumb

Plant and Soil Sciences
Event & Service Project

Growing plants is fun and rewarding.
Sunflowers! Watermelons! Pumpkins! Beautiful
flowers and good and healthy things to eat!

Project Green Thumb helps you learn all
about how plants grow – and gives you an
opportunity to produce something beautiful or
tasty.

Project Green Thumb lets you:

- Learn and practice good science
 - Experiment to find answers and opportunities
 - Be outdoors and active
 - Put food or flowers on the table
 - Plan, organize and carry through on a challenging project
-
- What You Will Learn:
 - About plants and the soil
 - To be a better scientist
 - How to be a better farmer or gardener
 - To explore your preferences and make your own decisions

Who Can Participate

Any Alabama young person may participate in any 4-H competitive event. However, you must be a member of an Alabama 4-H Club. It's easy and quick to join – just call or e-mail your county Alabama Cooperative Extension System Office for information (for contact information, go to www.aces.edu/counties).

If you and your friends are interested, you might wish to start a 4-H Project Club. It could focus on Gardening or Growing and Selling Fruits and Vegetables. For information, see **Starting a 4-H Club** (www.Alabama4H.com).

Project Green Thumb is a 4-H Event. Your local Extension Office has information on local and regional **Project Green Thumb** events, as well as other 4-H activities.



Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A & M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.

Levels of Competition

Look at **General Event Policy** for eligibility.

http://www.aces.edu/fourh/docs/programs/General_Contest_Policy.pdf

Check the **Alabama 4-H Age and Eligibility Chart** to determine the divisions of 4-H Membership.

http://www.aces.edu/fourh/docs/programs/Eligibility_Chart.pdf

Rules for Project Green Thumb

- Compete by yourself or on a two-person team. Youth on teams should be the same 4-H age level (e.g., Senior Level II).
- The purpose of your exhibit is to look at some important aspect of soil or growing plants.
- Your exhibit should teach or inform.
- **For Seniors, complete the Community Service Report or prepare a report on community service as it relates to Project Green Thumb.**
- Senior Exhibits must fit on a table 6 feet long and 3 feet deep. Tables are provided.
- Junior and Intermediate Exhibits are no larger than 3 feet by 3 feet.
- The height of the exhibit may not be taller than 36 inches. You may not use the wall to post materials.
- Everything in the exhibit must be original and developed by the 4-H member. Printed computer generated visuals may be used.
- Information in the exhibit must be accurate. Use references when appropriate.
- Provide an educational handout.
- Moving parts, sound or light of any type are not allowed in the exhibit.
- The participant must be available at the exhibit to answer judges' questions. The judges will informally talk with you about the subject of your exhibit and how you put the exhibit together. Naturally, you will need to be well groomed and appropriately dressed.
- The 4-H member must be able to set up his or her exhibit without excessive adult help.
- You cannot provide sample products to taste.
- Be aware of copyright laws – don't copy information from another source without crediting the source.
- Identify your exhibit as 4-H. Your audience should know you are a 4-H member. You can be creative in how you accomplish this.
- Cover brand names.
- Your display may not contain dangerous chemicals or other hazards.

Parents' and Volunteers' Guide

Like all 4-H projects, this activity is just for young people. It is expected that young people create their own projects. The role of adult helper is to support and encourage youth in their efforts, to ask and answer questions about the project, and to help youth learn specific techniques (such as fertilization) that they might use in their project.

The Service Component

Learning about plants is a wonderful thing, but you will need to put your new skill to work. There are some real benefits for you. Serving others helps you build your academic skills, learn civic responsibility and develop leadership. It may also give you a good opportunity to meet new people, publicize 4-H and practice your new skills.

It is important that you decide what service you can provide, not have a parent or 4-H leader make this decision for you. Groups of young people are encouraged to work together to discover how they can serve their community.

What Are Some Ideas?

You probably have some great ideas of how to use your knowledge of plants to serve others, but here are a few thoughts to get things rolling:

- Organize a group to plant flowers or help with a community garden.
- Help younger kids learn to plant flowers around their school or at home.
- Take flowers to a Senior Citizens Center.
- Teach someone to make art with items from nature.

Remember: always identify yourself as a member of 4-H and a participant in the *Alabama 4-H Project Green Thumb*.

About Judging

During event judging, the judge will ask you a few questions about your Service Project. They may ask about what you did and what you learned.

The Day of the Big Event

Each county or region will schedule its own **Project Green Thumb** or include this project with Freestyle events. It may be part of a County Round-Up or Regional Congress. Some places may have workshops that help young people learn to build their skills.

On the day of the event, allow yourself *plenty* of time to set up.

And be ready to *informally* answer some questions from the judges. These questions might be things like:

- "How did you create your project?"
- "What did you learn about plants?"
- "What would you do differently?"
- "What did you learn about science and problem solving?"

Competition is Celebrating Your Learning

Judges at your county event will determine which entries advance to the next level of competition. At Regional 4-H Congress for Juniors and State 4-H Congress for Seniors, all **Project Green Thumb** entries are already outstanding as measured by a standard of excellence.

Be ready to informally discuss with the judges your learning experience. This discussion will take about 3 minutes for Senior Events. Judges will probably start by saying something like: "Tell me about your project and what you did". Be prepared with about a 1-minute response. Be excited and confident!

4-H Regional/Area Awards will be determined by the planning committee for that event. Notice will be sent to each county involved.

State Competition and Awards

Each county may register one Senior Level I and one Senior Level II individual in each event that is offered.

On the state level, ribbons will be awarded to 50% of the participants in a contest using ordinal rankings up to a tenth place ranking. Example: If there are 10 participants, first place will receive the Alabama State Trophy and a first place ribbon; placing ribbons will be awarded for the next four ranked participants for placing of second through fifth. The other five participants will receive honorable mention ribbons.

Identification of Entry

Name(s), county and level of participation should be displayed with each entry. 4-H Project Exhibit cards are available, but not required.

Disqualifications for Project Green Thumb

- >Exceed size limits for exhibit
- >Not completing Community Service Form

Deductions for Project Green Thumb

- >Not providing a hand-out for exhibit
- >Not identifying sources of information

Suggestions for Event Facilitators

1) The guidelines for **Project Green Thumb** have many points in common with **Freestyle** events. Event Facilitators may wish to include **Project Green Thumb** entries with **Freestyle** entries.

2) Hearing youth talk about their learning is really fun, and seeing the results of their learning is exciting. Event facilitators should try to have **Project Green Thumb** entries open for public viewing.

3) The selection of judges is important to the success of the event. The ideal judge chats easily with young people and is interested in learning new things. Basically, in **Project Green Thumb** the judge is the learner and the 4-H participant is the teacher. Judges should begin by prompting the 4-H'er... "Tell me about your entry". Sample follow-up questions might be:

- "Where did you get your idea or information?"
- "What equipment did you use?"
- "How did you select your materials?"
- "What were some of the challenges you had?"
- "What would you do differently if you could?"

4) The **Project Green Thumb** Score Sheet is designed to make judging easy, uniform, and educational for the 4-Her. A description of each standard (white, red, blue) for evaluation is provided. Descriptions are written in youth friendly terms and should be given to the 4-Her at the end of the competition after the awards have been presented.

Project Green Thumb Ideas

Crop Science – Corn, beans, cotton, peanuts

Vegetable gardening

Flower gardening

Indoor gardening

Creative gardening – develop exhibit utilizing the experimental and plant science topics

Ornamental Gourds

Decorated Gourds

Herbs

Fruits and Nuts

Landscapes, Waterscapes

Salads – Greens that are edible

Patio Pots

Sports – Turf Grasses

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How I Have Helped Others: My 4-H Community Service Report

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.
- Gandhi

Name:

County:

Date:

Number of Youth Served:

Number of Adults Served:

Start & End Date:

Number of People Involved: _____

Did you recruit others to help?

Total Hours of Effort: _____

Your time and the time of volunteers you recruited.

Briefly describe your project:

Reflection. What difference did this project make in your life or in the lives of others?

Documentation Provide photographs and any publicity such as news clippings.

Examples of Service Projects:

- *I visited a class of 20 1st Graders and got them to tell stories about their pets. This helped them learn to talk in front of a group.*
- *I got kids in my Club to help me plant pansies in the flower bed at the library. They learned good gardening technique and provided something pretty for our community. We put up a sign: "Flowers provided by the High Hopes 4-H Club."*
- *My friends and I participated in the Community Arts Festival. We displayed our quilts in a 4-H booth and taught younger kids how to make quilt square designs using glue and paper.*
- *I grew lots of squash in my garden. I took some to the Food Bank and gave some to elderly neighbors. I put 4-H Clovers on the paper bags.*

Estimated monetary value: \$ _____

What do you think your service was worth to the community? You can estimate the dollar value of the volunteers' time. For youth, value their time at minimum wage, \$7.25/hour. For adults, use \$20.25/hour.

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Score Sheet: Project Green Thumb

Name of Participant: _____ County: _____

Level: ___ **Junior** (Age 9-11) ___ **Intermediate** (Age 12-13) ___ **Senior I** (Age 14-15) ___ **Senior II** (Age 16-18)

Description of Entry: _____ 4-H Project Area: _____

	Knowledge & Skills (Check Column)	Excellent	Good	Could Improve	Points Received	Comments
Minds On Learning (3 min discussion)	Time & Effort - 5 points Time spent in learning new skills					
	Knowledge - 10 points Demonstrated full knowledge of subject with explanations and elaboration					
	Problems Solved & Decisions Made - 10 points Learning by trial & error has taught you important skills and made you independent.					
	Future Learning - 5 points Your detailed plans for continued learning will make you successful.					
	Standard of Quality - 10 points You have full knowledge of quality standards pertaining to your entry; and have used accurate sources of information					

Hands-On Learning (contest entry)	Self Assessment - 10 points You told me your workmanship was excellent					
	Workmanship - 10 points Excellent workmanship					
	Suitable for use - 10 points It is constructed well for intended use.					
	Content - 10 points By looking at your entry I have a complete idea of what you've done and learned					
	Organization - 10 points Logical and interesting sequence. Easy to understand					
	Creativity - 10 points Your entry has lots of appeal and is an original idea					

Deductions Assessed _____

Total Score _____

Disqualification for Project Green Thumb

- Exceeds size limits for exhibit.
- Not completing the Community Service Report

Deduction for Project Green Thumb (10 points)

- Not providing a hand-out for exhibit.
- Not identifying sources of information.