

Home Grounds Team Outcomes & Impacts Report 2021

► The Alabama Extension Home Grounds team supports homeowners with science-based projects about planning, planting, and caring for gardens and plants in indoor and outdoor residential spaces. The team also supports Alabama Master Gardeners, who are volunteer educators and valued members of this Extension team.

Title: Alabama Smart Yards (ASY)

Project Leader: Kerry Smith

Institutional Lead: 1862 Extension–AU

Project Objectives: Teach best management practices involved with planning, planting, and caring for plants in residential and community green spaces, indoors and outdoors.

Background/Situation/Issue: Alabama Smart Yards is a statewide program that addresses the Alabama critical issue of Natural Resource Conservation and Management, Environmental Sustainability, and Climate control. This program teaches and promotes best management practices for individuals and groups managing residential landscapes and community properties.

Outputs:

- 15,980 participants in ASY programs (direct contacts)
- 34,108 web page visits and video views* (indirect contacts)
- 170 programs offered (126 face-to-face, 44 virtual)
- 16 demonstration gardens maintained throughout state
- 8,500 participants in group events
- More than 11,800 participants in one-on-one consultations

Audience Diversity: 169 reported activities with 6,755 in-state participants; 78% female, 32% male; 84% White; 14% Black, less than 1% each American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander, or participants from more than one race.

Evaluation Techniques: Paper-based and online surveys; website and social media use reports

Value Statement/Synopsis:

- Participants reported an average cost saving of \$70/program.
- Participants reported an average program value of \$62/program.
- 63% of participants implemented a cost-saving practice from attending a previous program.

Return on Investment: 58:1 (\$58 for each dollar invested)



Social Media Channels

<https://www.facebook.com/AlabamaSmartYardsAlabamaExtension>

<https://www.instagram.com/alabama.smart.yards>

Key Web Page

Get Outside with Alabama Smart Yards Webinar Series: <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/lawn-garden/smart-yards-online-series>

Testimonials

“I needed information on lawn grasses and the requirement for successful growth. You gave expert information and evaluation on growing options for lawn help.”

“Live oak tree dropping leaves prematurely. Leaves blistering, turning brown, and dropping. We sent photos for an analysis of the problem. Extremely valuable advice”

“I had questions about my Hydrangeas. Excellent help!! Clearly gave me instructions and two links so that I can learn more. Priceless information!”

Title: Grow More, Give More (GMGM)

Project Leader: Bethany O’Rear

Institutional Lead: 1862 Extension–AU

Project Objectives: Teach best management practices to home gardeners for productive residential and community food gardens with a philanthropic component to address local food insecurity.

Background/Situation/Issue: GMGM addresses the critical issue of improving food systems and food safety as food insecurity remains a problem in many Alabama communities. This new program teaches and promotes best management practices to home gardeners for creating and sustaining productive residential or community gardens to provide nutritious and safe food choices for themselves and community members in need.

Outputs:

- 5,575 participants trained
- 4,332 web page visits and video views
- 7,267 downloads of the mobile app SOW, A Planting Companion
- 78 workshops and other training events
- 11 demonstration and teaching gardens
- Nearly 3,000 participants at GMGM group training events and more than 4,100 via one-on-one training

Audience Diversity: 79 reported activities with 2,553 in-state participants. 68% female, 32% male; 85% White, 13% Black, and less than 1% each American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander, and other races.

Evaluation Techniques: Surveys, food production record

Collaborators: Through Extension agents and a volunteer network of Master Gardeners with available local resources, GMGM provides the support and knowledge home gardeners and communities need to grow and manage successful food crops. As a philanthropic program, GMGM also provides increased social awareness and energizes our volunteers and communities.

Value Statement/Synopsis:

- Participants reported an average program value of \$62/event.
- Participants reported an average cost savings from learned techniques of \$50/program.
- \$60,274 of fresh produce donated, based on average fresh produce retail of \$1.85
- 32,580 total pounds of food donations
- 5,196 families received fresh produce donations
- 2,046 transplants grown and donated by Master Gardeners
- 86% of total produce grown and donated by Master Gardeners
- 63% of our clients implemented something they were taught

Return on Investment: 44:1 (\$44 for each dollar invested)

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Key Web Page

Grow More Give More: <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/products-programs-lawn-garden/grow-more-give-more/>

Video

<https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/lawn-garden/grow-more-give-more-videos/>

Grant Acknowledgment: Alabama RC&D

Testimonials

“My vegetable garden was not producing well. He recommended the correct fertilizer and proper amounts. This was my first-time calling Extension but I will use it again.”

“A large tree recently fell right on top of an old pear tree that is important to my family. I reached out to learn how we could salvage any of it. She shared specifics on how to make cuttings, length, what to grow them in, and how to manage them over the next year. This meant so much to me.”

Title: Extension Master Gardener (MG) Volunteer Training and Management

Project Leader: Kerry Smith

Institutional Lead: 1862 Extension–AU

Project Objectives: Recruit, train, and retain a core group of volunteers to support Extension Home Grounds programs and the land grant mission through volunteer led outreach and education

Co-Leaders/Collaborators: Master Gardeners, Extension Agents, Agriculture, Plant Pathology, Home Grounds Regional Extension Agent (REA) Instructors, County Extension Coordinators, Specialists, Non-Home Grounds Regional Extension Agents, Professional Instructors and Speakers

Background/Situation/Issue: Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Training and Management is a nationwide program addressing the Alabama critical issue for Natural Resource Conservation and Management, Environmental Sustainability, and Climate control. This program trains a core group of volunteers in environmental sciences and horticulture to support Extension agents in providing education and outreach to home gardeners and noncommercial community groups on gardening, environment, and Extension programs.

Outputs:

- 32 counties participated in online training
- 17 in-person training locations
- 13 Home Grounds regional Extension agent (REA) program leaders
- 4 County Extension coordinator (CEC) program leaders
- 1 County Extension agent (CEA) program leader
- 1,472 reporting MG and MG intern volunteers
- 143,773 MG and MG intern volunteer hours

Outcomes:

- \$7.2 million community value
- 2 million community contacts receiving horticulture information
- 459,000 demonstration and community garden contacts
- 28,514 total pounds or 16+ tons of produce donated
- 2,046 transplants grown and donated by Master Gardeners

Audience Diversity: 98 reported activities with 2,091 in-state participants; 76% female, 24% male; 95% White, 4% Black, and less than 1% each American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander, and other races.

Evaluation Techniques: Surveys, advice line recommendations and follow-ups, satisfied customers, program 3's and success increase, outreach capabilities increase

Return on Investment: 11:1 (\$11 for each dollar invested)



Social Media Channels

Alabama Master Gardener Helpline on Facebook and Instagram:

<https://www.facebook.com/AlabamaMasterGardenerHelpline>

<https://www.instagram.com/alabama.mg.helpline/>

Key Web Page

Become a Master Gardener Volunteer (<https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/lawn-garden/become-a-master-gardener-volunteer/>)

Grant Acknowledgment: Harvest for Health. Funding through NIH-R01 led by Demark-Wahnefried at O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB. The Alabama Extension Master Gardener Program received \$66,587.00 to manage its part of the project in 2021.

Testimonials

“Ants were coming up through cracks in sidewalks, patios, driveway also invading my vegetable garden. The Master Gardener was very nice to talk to and she e-mailed me recommendations. I have called many times in the past and found your service helpful and friendly.”
- Anonymous

“Needed information on caring for my roses, pruning, and suggestions for other landscape plants. GREAT advice and easy to follow instructions.” - M. Johnston

“My home lawn needed a rehabilitation. It is mostly weeds and I believe that the soil is not good. You sent me the soil test information and gave good information about fertilizers.” - N. Travis



For more information, contact your county Extension office. Visit www.aces.edu/directory.

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