| **County Name:** | Garden County | **Employee Name:** | Ag Agent |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year(s):** | 2021-2024 | **Core Program Area:** | Ag & Natural Resources |

| **PROGRAM NAME** |
| --- |
| Consumer Horticulture |

| **SITUATION STATEMENT**  |
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| In 2018 the National Gardening Survey indicated that 77% of American households garden in some way. Other estimates reveal that consumer horticulture and supporting industries contribute nearly $200 billion to the US economy each year and support over 2 million jobs. Recent trends indicate that more and more Americans are growing their own food (35% of households) while interests in ornamentals remains high, particularly in the area of gardening to support pollinators and other ecological uses of plants. American gardens will continue to look to Cooperative Extension for specific answers to their gardening questions. Home horticulture is a key program area with the most extensive agricultural engagement effort delivered by the NC Extension Master Gardener program. This train-the-trainer opportunity increases the knowledge and skills of participants who then assist county agents in educating the public to decrease the misuse of fertilizers, insecticides, and pesticides in gardens, home lawns, and landscapes; increase overall food production and availability; enhance wildlife habitat; and improve human health and wellbeing. In Garden County, a recent needs assessment survey revealed that 72% of respondents indicated educational programming in consumer horticulture was a very important for Extension to deliver. Garden County has had an increase in levels of concern regarding pesticide safety among residents. There have also been new plant diseases introduced to shrubs growing in home landscapes within the county in the past 2 years. Cooperative Extension has experienced an increase in the number of calls inquiring about how to establish community gardens.  |

| **STATEWIDE PROGRAM GOAL** |
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| Increase profitability and efficiency across all areas of the horticulture industry through adoption of recommended Best Management Practices (BMPs). |

| **TARGET AUDIENCE(S)**  | **COLLABORATION** |
| --- | --- |
| Home owners, community garden participants, housing authority residents, schools, educators, community members, neighborhood associations, volunteers, youth | Garden County Elementary SchoolWest Middle SchoolEast Middle SchoolGarden County Housing AuthorityLatinx Center |

| **PROGRAM OUTCOMES** |
| --- |
| **SHORT TERM OUTCOMES****(changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, or aspirations)** | **MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES** **(changes in behavior or practice)** |
| * Increased knowledge of horticulture and best practices in soil health, water conservation, and chemical use
* Increased understanding of the value of diagnostic testing
* Increased ability to match plants to appropriate planting location
* Increased understanding of the value of native plants
* Increase knowledge of pollinator protection
* Increased understanding and appreciate the benefits of growing their own food
* Increased knowledge and skills for best practices in gardening (ornamental and edible)
 | * Use of Extension diagnostic services
* Adoption of Integrated Pest Management practices
* Adoption of best practices in water quality and/or soil health
* Adoption of practices to handle chemicals safely
* Adoption of new organic techniques, native plants, new varieties, and postharvest techniques
* Supplement diets with food grown in home or community gardens
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| **LONG TERM OUTCOMES****(changes in social, economic, environmental conditions)**  |
| * Increased accessibility to healthy, fresh foods
* Reduced plant loss in landscaping
* Minimized environmental impact by following recommended use of pesticides, herbicides, and/or fertilizers
* Added value or reduced expenses with landscaping
* Improved physical, social and/or mental health
* Increased number of community gardens
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| **PROGRAM DELIVERY** |
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| Workshops: * Growing beautiful lawns
* Growing vegetables
* Pruning shrubs
* Residential pesticide safety
* School Garden coordinator training

Events:* Spring garden expo
* Garden tours

Master Gardener Program: * Master Gardener training
* Master Gardener community programs

Other* Youth garden kits
* Homeowner consultations
* Website
* Social media
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| **EVALUATION PLAN** | **MARKETING & DIVERSITY PLAN** |
| --- | --- |
| * Pre-post test end of session evaluations to assess short term knowledge gained.
* 1 year follow-up evaluation to assess long-term knowledge, skill and practice changes and to measure program impacts.
 | * Additional efforts will be made to reach Latinx communities in test county. The Latinx community center will collaborate on a community garden project and provide space for offering training classes to engage more members of the Hispanic/Latino community.
* The XYZ church which has a large Latinx population will be contacted to discuss partnership opportunities.
* Marketing efforts will also include advertising in locations frequented by the Latinx community and on popular social media sites.
* Explore having a booth at Latinx expo.
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