Providing Gardeners with Information

The Need: North Carolina’s population continues to grow, with more people moving to the state and becoming homeowners, creating a demand for practical information about home gardening. Home horticulture consumers need a reliable source for information to help them landscape their homes while minimizing environmental impact.

Serving the Need: The UNC-TV show In the Garden with Bryce Lane, helps meet this need for viewers across the state by providing research-based gardening information to the public. The show, which airs twice weekly, features Bryce Lane, an award-winning horticultural science professor in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

In the Garden breaks ground in several ways for N.C. State University and UNC-TV. Part of a new partnership between the university and the public television station, the series marks the first time in 40 years that UNC-TV has broadcast a college-credit course for the university system. The program is making an impact in distance education in several ways. From retirees in rural communities to community college students and professionals, In the Garden is reaching a wide range of audiences. Many viewers who had never heard of distance education are now participating in the course through the weekly television show.

Television is among the most powerful media available, with the ability to reach millions of viewers at once. Distance education courses on television provide educational opportunities to citizens on all economic and social levels. Serving as both a television show and a college-credit course, In the Garden is carrying out the college’s commitment to lifelong learning and community outreach.

Impact beyond North Carolina: In the Garden reaches an average of 100,000 viewers each week, so the show has dramatically increased the visibility of NC State University’s Introduction to Home Horticulture course. Since the premiere of the show/course, the number of students enrolled has steadily increased. The first semester the course was offered, there were only five students enrolled. In 2007, a total of 47 students are enrolled in In the Garden courses. Nearly a dozen North Carolina Cooperative Extension agents and specialists are currently using In the Garden as a training tool for the Master Gardeners program and to help educate citizens about horticulture. And at least 15 high schools and 20 community colleges across the state are using the program for supplemental classroom instruction.

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