

Horticulture Skills for the Workplace

Fundamentals for Implementing a “Horticultural Skills Program at Institutions”

September 22, 2010

*Eastern State
Hospital*

*Merrimac Juvenile
Detention Center*

Project Background

- **Resource Needs:**
- *Volunteers:* 3-6 plus 2 coordinators
- *Volunteer hours:* coordinators approximately 50 hours, plus class time
- *MG speakers:* 2 hours per class (including drive time)
- *Project Cost:* \$100.00

- **Project Description:** To teach basic horticulture skills to sentenced juvenile offenders – ages 14-17.

Project Objectives - Merrimac

- To expose student to community business leaders in the landscape industry and Master Gardeners.
- To offer realistic, practical knowledge about horticulture through classroom lecture and field trips.
- To offer hands-on gardening experience
- To help student develop a horticultural portfolio and earn a skills certificate.
- To help the student earn credit towards a GED and SOL requirements.

Project Objectives - Eastern State

- Educating those individuals managing mental illness
- Increase their knowledge of plants and gardening
- Increase social skills and self esteem
- Introduce and encourage team work skills
- Sustain a group that can be implemented in a care-giving environment and preserve the garden for future participants

Topics Covered

- 1. Working in the Horticultural Industry**
- 2. Propagation**
- 3. Insects and Diseases**
- 4. Weed Identification and soils**
- 5. Woody Plants and pruning**
- 6. Grafting**
- 7. Herbs and Vegetable Gardening**

FIELD TRIPS, HANDS-ON GARDENING &
GRADUATION

Project Supports

VCE and JCC/WG Goals

- The project stresses environmentally sound horticultural practices. Using a specific curriculum developed by Master Gardeners, the program endeavors to educate the student in sustainable landscape management practices.
- *These projects were instituted and sponsored by a former extension agent under VEC Projects and leaders of the Master Gardener Therapeutic Gardening program.*

Project Implementation

- People needed other than MG/interns are:
 - Area extension agents
 - Various people involved in the landscape industry

Measuring Success - Merrimac

- Due to confidentiality issues relating to the students, our only measurement, other than questions and answer periods during class time, is **feedback from the transition teacher** regarding the student after he or she has left the facility

Measuring Success - Eastern State

- Feedback from Eastern State staff:
Volunteer coordinator and landscape
superintendent

Impact To-Date

- Merrimac
 - Feedback from the Center's director, the guards, and the transitional teacher
 - The students' interest and participation
 - Students' notes of appreciation
- Eastern State
 - The interest and participation of the residents
 - Evaluation forms by the project leader

Risk Management Plan

- We ask that master gardeners review our risk management practices. Merrimac does not require any formal training, however, each speaker is provided with a visitation “guidelines and procedures” handout prior to their visit.
- A three-hour volunteer orientation by the facility (Eastern State) is required.

Students at Work



The Anniversary Garden



Master Gardeners Sharing their Expertise



Choosing Plant Material



Getting Started

1. Select project coordinators
2. Determine what the facility wants from you
3. Have an understanding of time allotted
4. Location; Classroom availability, greenhouse, water access, storage, portable planters, garden
5. Budget; Does facility have funding or not?

Getting Started (cont.)

6. Look at your resources; Volunteers, experts and speakers – Virginia Cooperative Extension, local and state VMGA Master Gardeners, VaTech, 4-H, garden clubs, horticultural societies, high school students (required service hours), nurseries, local municipality landscape superintendents (Public Works Dept)

Getting Started (final steps)

7. Decide on a curriculum – See handout
8. Determine risk management requirements
9. Measure the success of the program; Evaluations, tests, feedback from both students/residents and those in charge.