



# Hanover Master Gardeners Working with the Public

Our mission is to spread the word about environmentally sound horticulture practices through Sustainable Landscape Management.

This means public contact for us.

# Three ways

## 1. One-on-one

- a. Plant clinics
- b. Adult day care
- c. Youth activities

## 2. Help Desk / phone / email conversations

## 3. Presentations

- a. Speakers bureau
- b. HGS
- c. Member led meetings
- d. Training class

Message – VT recommended practices not some wives tales about how things can be done.

Can use resources from other .edu websites

Our job as educators is to make sure our audience understands.

Some rules will apply to all types of communications.

# Plant Clinics

- Don't be intimidated that you don't know it all.
- Other master gardeners at the booth with you.
- Access to internet with smart phones or tablets.
- Send a question request back to the office.
- The Pest Management Guide book is in the box of clinic supplies. Use it!
- Don't be afraid to say "I don't know" as long as you follow it up with "let's see if we can find an answer".

# Engage the passer-by

- We often have a visual attraction
- Smile
- Show enthusiasm for wanting to help them
- “Hi, we are here to answer gardening questions you might have.”

- Stand rather than sit
- Arms open not folded
- May not have an immediate question
- Suggest they come back later if they think of anything



- Handout telling them about VT publications – research for themselves
- Possible way to answer questions when they come up at a later time
  - Our phone number
  - Our email address

# Understand the question

- Communications is about 90% listening
- Use reflective listening – rephrase the question back to make sure you understand

# Be polite

- Don't say "that was dumb"
- Rather something like "that is not generally what we recommend"
- Finish with a suggested way to how to fix the problem

- If they ask where to get seeds for Hanover tomatoes you could say something like “a lot of people ask that” to make them feel like it’s not a stupid question

“Everyone you will ever meet knows something you don’t.” – Bill Nye

“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”  
Stephen R. Covey

“Never underestimate their intelligence. Always underestimate their knowledge.”

- You don't have to impress them with your knowledge
- Our training gives us tools to research what we don't know
- Watch for body language / did they understand / rolling eyes / averted gaze
- When possible relate your experience to any advice you give to make it real

# Follow through

- If you can't answer their question
- Fill out request form
- Turned into the office
- Research it at home and respond

# **Mention our Home Gardening Series program**

- Free
- Open to public
- 2 hours on Saturday morning
- Schedule posted on web site



# Thank you for stopping by

- Business card with phone number and web address
- Handout with web address for VT pubs in case they think of questions later

# Everyone is Unique

- We all learn in different ways
- Reading / listening / doing
- Many of us have learning disabilities
  - For me it's facial recognition and remembering phone numbers

# Special Consideration for Working with Seniors

- May have visual or hearing challenges
- May have memory problems
- May move more slowly
- May not be as flexible
- Adult learn differently than children
  - Need to relate a new concept to something they already know

# Working with Youth

- Children soak up new ideas
- Remember their lack of experience
- Hands-on works well with children
- Don't interact with children without supervising adult present

# Help Desk

- Might get a call while you are in the office
- Most calls are left as voice mails
- With a live call you may have to research and get back to them by either phone or email
- Sometimes a link to a document will be what they need
- We keep a log of calls
- Use the log to see if this is a recurring question with hopefully an answer

# Communications by Phone

- Speak clearly and not too fast
- Make sure you understand their question – reflective listening
- Think in terms they will understand
- Ask the kinds of questions they will be able to answer

- Question “How do I get rid of these bugs in my garden?”
- Might have to ask many questions to drill down before being able to answer
- The answer might be bring a sample by the office and we’ll send it off to tech for identification

# Emails

- Don't use all caps
  - LIKE SHOUTING
  - HARD TO READ



# Presentations

- Different than conversations
- Audience is expected to listen
- Respond only with questions for clarification

# Preparation

- Preparation may take as much as 4 times the hours as the talk itself
- When preparing understand your audience
- Practice timing
- Start your preparation early
  - I set it aside for a few days and then review which makes my mistakes jump out at me
  - If possible have someone else proof read

# Actual Presentation

- Always start on time
- Set the ground rules / no cell phones / where the restrooms are / when to expect breaks
- When using projected images, face the audience not the screen
- Move around a bit

- Make eye contact
- Use humor – not jokes
- Vary your tone and rhythm
- Avoid talking too fast
- Don't read from the slides
- Practice – Toastmaster can help give you experience

- Use props if appropriate
- Do apologize if some of your data turns out to be inaccurate
- Avoid using “um”, “ah”, and “you know”
- Arrive early to get PowerPoint up and running

# PowerPoint Pointers

- Use bullet points rather than sentences
- Use consistent formatting
- No more than 2 fonts per page
- Serif fonts are easy to read for text - Times New Roman
- San serif fonts have cleaner lines – Ariel

- ALL CAPS, *Italics* and *Cursive* are difficult to read
- Use fonts large enough to be read from back of room – at least 32 points
- Can use **bold** or a different **color** to draw the eye to a particular word or phrase

- Avoid Inconsistent Wording
  - Test scores will improve
  - Expanding knowledge
  - It will reduce time off task
  - Grades increase
- Better
  - Improved test scores
  - Expanded knowledge
  - Reduced time off tasks
  - Increased grades



- 6 or less bullets per page
- No more than two layers of bullets
- Use dark fonts on a light background for best printing
- Keep the same background for entire presentation

- Keep left justification for bullets
- Bullets that are center justified are hard to read

- Move graphics to side of page to leave room for text
- Avoid too many graphics or animation

- 10-20-30 Rule
  - No more than 10 slides
  - No more than 20 minutes
  - No text less than 30 points
- 2 minutes per slide rule

# **In General we Avoid Handouts**

- Hard to know how many to print
- Can be posted to web site

# If You Do Use Printed Handouts

- Dark backgrounds are difficult
- Even at 2 per page fonts may be difficult to read
- Hand out ahead so they can take notes
- Have page numbers on slides

## Q&A

- When you call for questions at the end give them time for formulate what they want to ask.
- When someone asks a question repeat it to the audience for those who may not have heard the question.
- Saying “that’s a good question” or “I’m glad you asked that” gives you a moment to get your thoughts together for an answer.

Now you can tell me about all the rules I have  
broken

Questions?