



# MSU Extension Education & Research Improving the Quality of Life

## In Missoula County

### **Agriculture**

Extension teamed up with the Missoula City-County Health Department and conducted an education program on West Nile Virus. In cooperation with the MSU Entomology Department, mosquitoes were collected from June to September. None of the mosquitoes collected in Missoula were found to have the virus.

A Sheep grazing project was established to manage leafy spurge and spotted knapweed on 2000 acres. Clipping studies were implemented to determine the impact on noxious weed and on desired vegetation.

### **Horticulture**

Science-based information was provided commercial landscapers, nursery personnel, small landowners, backyard gardeners and Master Gardeners this year. We also worked with the Montana Native Plant Society and several land stewardship organizations, providing them information on native plant restoration and gardening.

Our Pest Monitoring Program provided timely insect, disease, and weed management recommendations via the Plant Clinic and Pest Alert Phone Line (258-3820). The Plant Clinic, developed in the year 2000, continues to be a huge success, helping over 2000 people annually with horticulture and plant pest problems.

Over 1000 copies of our Pest Management Calendar were given out this year. This educational material was developed with data from our Pest Monitoring Program. Also published is our 740-page Master Gardener manual on sustainable and organic horticulture production.

An Integrated Pest Management Certification Course was presented to 55 plant professionals. The course focused on how to promote plant health, minimize plant pests, and use least-toxic pest management materials. The Master Gardener program continues to be successful. More than 400 Master Gardeners have graduated over the last eight years. This is a 14-week course given each fall. Educational materials development is done with data from our monitoring program and is for the Pest Management Calendar, a free publication given out this year to over 1000 Montana residents and to members of the Montana Nursery and Landscape Association. Recently published is our 740-page Master Gardener manual on sustainable and organic horticulture production.

The Master Gardener program, given each fall, has graduated more than 400 people over the past eight years. This is an 11-week course covering botany, soil management, composting and fertilizers, turf management, pruning, plant pathology, disease management, weed management, pesticide safety and basic plant pathology.

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Missoula County Extension Office is located at 2825 Santa Fe Court in Missoula Phone 406-258-4200



**An educational resource dedicated to improving the quality of people's lives by providing research-based knowledge to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of families, communities and agricultural enterprises.**

### **EFNEP reaches Youth**

A total of 517 low-income youth received nutrition education from EFNEP last year. Third and fifth graders at Title One schools were targeted for a series of six lessons including the food pyramid, food safety, and physical activity. A survey taken after the lessons revealed an increase in hand washing, eating more vegetables, and nutrition knowledge. After doing a Petri dish experiment, one youth commented, "I am going to wash my hands every time before I eat . . . those bacteria are gross!"

### **Family and Consumer Science**

A \$2000 mini grant from MSU was awarded three agents in the office for a pedometer program called "Step Into Health." The program consisted of six sessions that included instruction and walking. Each participant was provided a pedometer and a walking log, as well as information on the importance of physical activity, sound nutrition and foot care. Awards were given for the "most steps" and "best attendance." Everyone received a certificate. Sixty-four percent of the participants made gains in healthy food choices, more physical activity, managing stress and personal goals. Targeted audiences were 4-H youth and parents, Senior Citizens, Missoula County employees and EFNEP families. "Food Safety Works", a program for high school students, was implemented in advanced culinary classes in our local high schools. Students learned about safe food handling which may help them obtain employment and/or salary increases.

"Grandparents Raising Grandchildren" training sessions and updates have been held in Missoula. In Montana, over 6000 grandparents hold the primary responsibility for meeting the basic needs of their grandchildren, while over 11,000 children live in households with one or more grandchild under the age of 18 according to the 2000 U.S. Census. The FCS agent co-facilitates a local support group with Families First. They meet once a month where information is provided on legal issues, finances, medical care, parenting and social support.