

Green Industry Pollution Prevention Program: A New Georgia Partnership

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October 21, 2003

Southern Region Extension Water
Quality Conference



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Partnership:

Georgia Cooperative Extension Service (GCES) and the

Pollution Prevention Assistance Division (P2AD)

Agencies



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- **GCES**
 - **Department of Bio and Ag Engineering**
- **P2AD**
 - **Division of the Department of Natural Resources**
 - **provides non-regulatory, confidential technical assistance to prevent pollution for all sectors of Georgia**

Historical Context



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- **P2AD has contracted with GCES for 7 years for P2 for agriculture**
 - **Ag P2 program had grown to 5 specialists before the Environmental Horticulture specialist arrived**
 - **2002 AgP2 Specialist for Environmental Horticulture joined UGA faculty**



New P2 Program for Green Industries and Urban Agriculture

- **Purpose:**
 - Create and/or encourage an ethic of environmental stewardship in green industries and urban agriculture
 - Develop and teach best management practices
 - Promote the use of landscapes and plant materials as a way to improve the environment and decrease pollution

Georgia Urban Growth Statistics

- **72 % of Georgia's population lives in the top 5 cities**
- **10 county area that makes up metro. Atlanta has grown 2.3 % annually since 2000**
- **At least 1 million acres of lawns and landscape in Georgia**
- **Georgia homeowners spend an average of \$400 annually on their yards and gardens**

Green Industries In Georgia

- **Estimated that green industry producers and commercial landscape industries bring in \$6 million**
- **Green industries employ more than 700,000 people**
- **Georgia is number 14 of 50 states in share of cash receipts for floriculture and nursery crops (*USDA Economic Research Service*)**



Clientele

- **Nursery/Greenhouse – Wholesale/Retailers**
- **Commercial Landscape Designers, Installers, Maintenance**
- **Municipal or County – Parks and Playing Fields**
- **Golf Courses**
- **Homeowners and Gardeners**



Pollution Issues Specific to Green Industries

- **Organic Solid Waste**
 - Pruning, culling plants
 - Used growing media
 - Waste plastics
- **Water Quality and Usage Impacts**
 - Nutrient and pesticides
 - Soil erosion
 - Storm water runoff from impervious zones
 - Water waste
- Taken from USEPA NPPR *Sector Notebook Project Website*
<http://es.epa.gov/oeca/sector/index.html#crop>

Strategy



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- **Develop educational information on pollution prevention topics of highest concern**
- **Create training opportunities and incentives**
- **Build/Install demonstrations of best management practices**
- **Promote environmental stewardship and the use of environmental horticulture to solve pollution problems**

Approach



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- **Interdisciplinary Work**
 - Turfgrass and environmental horticulture scientists and specialists
- **Partnering with agencies and organizations**
 - Georgia Water Wise Council
 - Georgia Water and Pollution Control Association
 - Georgia Green Industries Association
 - Riverkeepers and Watershed Groups
 - GA –Department of Community Affairs and Regional Development Centers
 - Public Utilities –water supply and stormwater

Extension Pathways



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- **Support county agents that work with green industries**
- **Develop urban programming support for urban agents**
- **Provide opportunities for Master Gardeners to be involved with pollution prevention**
- **Involve specialists from other disciplines in pollution prevention initiatives**



Major Initiatives

- **Landscape Water Use Efficiency Training**
- **Stormwater Awareness and Best Management Practices for Urban Landscapes**
- **Environmental Management System Program for Nursery and Floriculture Producers**
 - **Based on Green*A*Syst Technical Guides**



Challenges

- **Working with urban audiences**
- **Learning urban partners**
- **Diversity of clientele**
- **Shrinking budgets and fewer extension people across the state**



Conclusions

- **There is a need for extension in urban agriculture**
- **In Georgia the need is expanding every year**
- **Extension must partner with other agencies in the urban setting**
- **Pollution prevention assistance requires interdisciplinary programs**



Final Conclusion

- **" Never be afraid to try something new. Remember that**
- **A lone amateur built the Ark.**
- **A large group of professionals built the Titanic."**

-Dave Barry