



## DO-IT-YOURSELF GARDENING series gets gardeners **GROWING**

### SITUATION

Wyoming gardeners are very persistent and determined; they have to be to put their own food on the dinner table. Even with the challenging climate, many people are interested in gardening. Another descriptor for Wyoming gardeners could include “self-reliant” – that is why they are growing their own food. However, as self-reliant as they may be, being armed with knowledge and skills helps them persevere against the elements and be rewarded with a bountiful crop.

University of Wyoming Extension and Carbon County Higher Education Center partnered to provide the tools for successful gardening and focusing on self-reliance. A series of do-it-yourself (DIY) gardening classes were designed to be

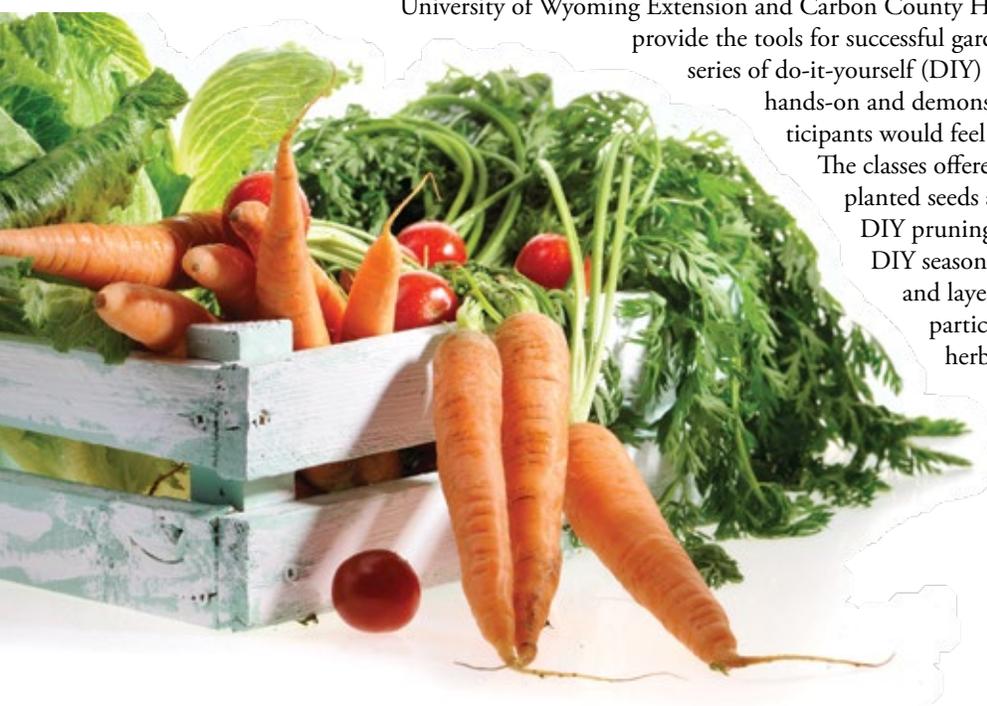
hands-on and demonstrate gardening techniques to ensure participants would feel comfortable completing projects at home.

The classes offered were: DIY seed starting – participants planted seeds and looked at different lighting designs;

DIY pruning – participants pruned trees and shrubs;

DIY season extension – participants built a low tunnel and layered compost; and DIY spiral herb bed –

participants built a spiral herb bed and sampled herb-inspired dishes.



The goals were: 1. Give participants skills and confidence to build their own projects. 2. Increase cost savings. 3. Enable participants to grow their own food.

Attendance was open, and the entire series was not required. Sixty-two people attended the four classes with 11 participants who attended several of the classes in the series.

## IMPACTS

Participants enjoyed the classes, and the hands-on teaching style was the key to success. Average overall rating for the series was 4.9 (1-5 scale; 1=Poor, 5=Excellent; 40 surveys returned).

Knowledge gained from the series was captured through post-class surveys. The overall average knowledge of the subject before and after presentations increased from 2.6 to 4.3 (1=Very Little, 5= A Lot). In a follow-up survey, 100 percent responded they had shared the information they learned in class with someone else.

Not only did participants enjoy the class, they saved money. The follow-up survey sent in the fall of 2013 showed that 50 percent saved more than \$20, and 25 percent saved more than \$50. One hundred percent responded they would save more in the future.

A few responses from participants when asked if they had built/used anything from class include:

- My husband and I built a seed starting setup in our basement. I was so pleased with the results that we are planning on expanding it this winter. John and I also built the spiral bed, which he rigged up for irrigation, as well.
- Started several squash plants, planted them in our alley! And now harvesting and sharing. It is wonderful!
- Had raised all the vegetables in my garden space from seeds in the spring.

The skills learned in this workshop series apply beyond the topics of the classes. One participant commented: "I have confidence that I can build/ don't need to purchase expensive packages." This will result in cost savings for years to come. The DIY Gardening Series was very successful in arming Wyoming gardeners with knowledge, skills, and confidence to grow their own food.



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