Your Florida Vegetable Garden

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Your Florida Vegetable Garden is a six-part video series on vegetable gardening in Florida. The increasing popularity of vegetable gardening has created a demand for more information about gardening in Florida. Many people rely on videos found online to learn new skills and while there are many videos on the internet on the topic of vegetable gardening, few of those are targeted to Florida audiences and fewer still with research-based information. The Urban Horticulture and Commercial Horticulture Agents teamed up to plan, write, and record this video series with the help of Pinellas County Communications. As of May 2015, there have been over 1700 views of these videos, which were posted in October 2014.

The goal was to create educational videos about vegetable gardening in Florida using research-based information from the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Cooperative Extension. The target audience for this video series includes home vegetable gardeners as well as those gardening in school and community vegetable gardens.

Materials and Methods

The Urban Horticulture and Commercial Horticulture Extension Agents teamed up to plan, write, and record this video series with the help of Pinellas County Communications. The agents used the county communications staff to record and produce the videos. While this created a very professional product, it was a time consuming effort as the communications department staff was very busy. The total project took one year from start to finish. Topics covered include fertilization, integrated pest management, micro-irrigation, plant selection and layout, site selection, and soils and composting. The agents split the six topics in half, outlined each area to create cue cards with talking points, and recorded one or two videos each per recording session. The Extension Agents also supplied the communications team with supporting graphics and web links. Research shows that short videos are more likely to be watched in their entirety so breaking it into short sections was critical. Video lengths ranged from 3 min, 18 s to 6 min, 54 s.

Results

The links to this series are available on the UF/IFAS Pinellas County Extension and Pinellas County YouTube channels and on our website <http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/home_landscape/index.shtml>.

The web links to the series are also sent to interested gardeners and has also been featured on the Pinellas County Facebook page. The videos already have 1769 views and plans to evaluate viewers on what they have learned and or implemented are in progress.

Conclusions

It is very important to keep the message in videos as short as possible. Using catchy keywords that people are likely to search for will garner more views as more people will find the videos. Using professional production staff will result in a more polished product, but production time will increase greatly. Finally, short educational videos like this are relatively easy to make and help reach an audience that might not otherwise know about Extension or be available to attend class in person.

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