



Using Social Media as an Outreach Tool for Extension Horticulture Programs

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Extension agents are always looking for new ways to reach a diverse audience as part of our outreach for research-based information. University of Florida/IFAS Horticulture Extension agents from southeastern counties of Florida met to discuss new ways to reach our clientele. Most of us work with homeowners and reaching this group is often a challenge. The group started using social media in 2011 as a new communication tool. Lamberts and Hunsberger developed a YouTube video demonstrating proper techniques for planting vegetable seeds. The Southeast Horticulture Extension agents developed a Facebook page that is updated weekly to provide timely information on horticulture and pest topics. Lamberts has a “work” Facebook page that she uses as an additional avenue for communicating with her clientele.

Lamberts conducted a search of YouTube videos trying to find one that showed how to plant a vegetable garden from seed. She did not find any that were useful for novices. The Miami-Dade County Extension office filmed and produced a 10-min video (Fig. 1) entitled “How to Plant a Seed.” It was posted online in Dec. 2011. As of Mar. 2012, the video had been viewed 203 times. Watch the video by following this link for “Vegetable Gardening 101—How to Plant a Seed” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzZ-WyQhVJY&feature=youtu.be>).

Additionally, a Facebook page was developed in Apr. 2011 for Southeast Florida residents. By Mar. 2012, 91 people “liked” the page and the peak number of people reached was 176 in Feb. 2012. From Apr. 2011 to Mar. 2012, there were 6,284 post views. At a recent Extension open house, several attendees stated

that they learned about the open house via Facebook invitations [South Florida Friendly Landscapes Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/>)].



Fig. 1. The Extension agents utilized YouTube to post a 10-min video on how to plant a seed.

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