

Name of Project: REAP (Realizing Economic Agricultural Potential) - Vegetable Garden Kit

Name of MG Group: Cumberland County Master Gardeners Association (herein CCMGA)

County: Cumberland County

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Category: **INNOVATIVE**

Commencement Date of Project: January 2012

MG's Ann Ebert Beverly Beers
Nancy Rich Nancy Christopherson
Fred Mullen Melinda Seigler

Total CCMGA Participation.....26 members

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: 500 WORDS OR LESS WORD COUNT (487)

THE PROJECT: REAP VEGETABLE GARDEN KIT
REAP (Realizing Economic Agricultural Potential)*One Garden at a Time.*

The 8" x 6" x 3" boxed kit includes everything needed to grow a 4 x 4 Square Foot – Three Season Vegetable Garden in a standard garden, raised garden bed or patio pots.

Contents:

- 19 Varieties of Vegetable Seed for planting Spring-Summer-Fall Gardens
- Instruction Booklet:
 - o Planting layout and instruction for each seasonal garden
 - o UT Publication SP 291-B and link to UT Extension website for additional publications
 - o CCMGA project information and support venues
- 10-10-10 Fertilizer
- Worm Castings
- Organic Compost
- Plant Markers
- Packaging: recycle in the garden

REAP was created:

- **To enhance UT based public educational venues.** Achieved by providing the kit for extended “hands on” learning made available through community partnerships and public classes.
- **To raise awareness of the benefits, economics and ease of growing a home vegetable garden.** Demonstrated by our Reap Garden at the Plateau Discovery Gardens and coupled with CCMGA classes and events.
- **To be a self perpetuating educational tool and fundraiser.** Demonstrated and achieved by reinvestment of funds from kits sold creating a self sustaining program.
- **To be available and appeal to all persons - age groups, economic and educational backgrounds etc, per UT Guidelines.** Availability achieved through our marketing venues, public classes and events. Wide range appeal has been achieved through concise step by step instructions understood by the newest of gardeners to the variety of seed that appeals to even the most seasoned gardener. Contents of compost and worm castings introduce organics experimentation.
- **Create awareness of the PCMG Volunteer Program and its role within the community.** Demonstrated through our community partnerships, marketing, display garden and classes. CCMGA provides additional support through our Ask the Master Gardener Desk and through the Reap Garden email.

Members from two MG Counties combined their unique talents and experience to create this program. The concept and logo design coupled with marketing skills have created a complete ‘brand’ - one easily understood and recognized. The REAP Garden Kit aligns with and enhances the mission of TNMG.

Innovative - it encompasses the gardening experience of MG’s along with UT Extension standards and publications making it easy and affordable for the homeowner to grow a vegetable garden - everything needed (sans soil and labor) in one complete, easy to understand package.

The REAP Begin Garden Kit is easily replicated. PCMG shared the initial concept and program with CCMGA. CCMGA refined and updated files to create an up-to-date user friendly disc that provides all the design components, instruction booklet, purchasing resource data, budget spreadsheet, seed counts and marketing brochures and tips. CCMGA shared the program and disc with Wilson County MG’s. They have successfully replicated the project in 2013. The files are easily accessed, modified and personalized by any MG County and are available to any MG county upon request.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION: 500 WORDS OR LESS WORD COUNT (485)

- PCMG shared the project with PDG (Plateau Discovery Garden) of CCMGA.
- January 2012 - A team of PDG CCMGA formed to review the possibilities of ‘test marketing’ and spearheading the REAP Initiative ‘Vegetable Garden Kit’.
- Committee was formed. Members created, evaluated, reviewed and updated material for:
 - accuracy to UT Extension Education and Standards
 - adaptability to our area and its growing conditions (temperatures/soil/etc)
 - appeal to the public – pricing and marketing

- educational and fundraising capabilities
- For **educational purposes** - Special attention was paid to clarifying the step by step seed and garden planting instruction, coupled with garden layout illustrations making the booklet simple and easy to follow. UT Publication SP-291 B - "Growing Vegetables from Seed" was included in the booklet along with the UT website link for additional suggested UT publications. Also noted: The CCMGA "Ask the Master Garden Desk" and the REAP Garden email for questions or comments to provide ongoing assistance if needed.
- Committee decided to proceed with "test-marketing" the kits @ \$10.00/each promoting them at the CCMGA Spring Garden Show (with demonstration garden), CCMGA PDG Fall Garden Fest (with demonstration garden), through members and UT Extension Office.
- Business Partners and Individual Sponsors were obtained for the initial funding.
- Orders for materials were placed.
- 'Open' call to CCMGA members for assembly of (100) REAP Garden Kits.
- To further 'test' the interest and usefulness of the program – CCMGA shared the program with several TNMG counties. (Results below)
- Fall of 2012 – the initial "test" program was evaluated. Orders were placed to create an additional (100) Garden Kits for 2013.
- 2013 New Project Request Form submitted– Project approved.
- Committee Project Review:
 - A need was identified. Two tier pricing was reviewed. Kits to sell for \$10.00 Counties or Educational Facilities purchase 25 kits or more for \$6.00/kit for resale.
 - Reviewed educational and marketing venues.
 - Partnerships identified and contacted:
 - UT Plateau AgResearch and Education Center
 - UT Extension of Cumberland County
 - Crossville Library
 - Burgess Falls Park (Youth Camp)
 - PC Soil Conservation
 - CRMC Hospital
 - Businesses/Individuals (sponsors/donors)
 - Decision to include questionnaires with the kits to profile the demographics regarding age, gardening experience and awareness of UT.
- 'Open' call to members for assembly. (200 kits assembled in 2013)

Plans for 2014:

- "REAP on the Road" – a "mobile" REAP demonstration garden has been constructed for planting. A committee of CCMGA members has formed to oversee the educational and display venues.
- REAP HARVEST – Three public classes are scheduled - "cooking & sampling" recipes prepared from REAP Garden harvests. One class for each garden season. CCMGA member also a professional chef will lead the classes and the committee.

- REAP and Cumberland County Schools – still in its infancy, interest has been shown in utilizing REAP Garden Kits as an educational fundraiser in our schools. Stay tuned!

FUNDING: 500 WORDS OR LESS WORD COUNT (214)

KITS COST \$3.00 PER KIT TO PRODUCE (BASED ON LOTS OF 100 KITS)

INITIAL INVESTMENT: \$300.00

** CCMGA OBTAINED BUSINESS AND INDIVIDUAL SPONSERS FOR THE INITIAL INVESTMENT AND PRODUCTION OF 100 KITS

CCMGA START UP COST: \$0.00

YEAR	INVESTMENT/	SOURCE OF FUNDS	#KITS PRODUCED	#KITS SOLD	PROFIT
2012	\$ 0.00**	BUSINESS/INDIVIDUAL SPONSORS	100	65*	\$ 600.00
2013		BEGINNING INVENTORY.....	35		
2013	\$ 172.26	REINVESTMENT & SPONSORS	100	135*	\$1012.00
2013	\$ 138.64	REINVESTMENT & SPONSORS	100	54*	\$ 380.00
		CURRENT INVENTORY.....	46		

*NOTE: Kits sold include kits dispensed at no charge for promotion or gifting.

RECAP 2012/2013

Income \$ 1992.00

Spent: \$ 310.90

Profit \$ 1681.10

Profits of Education **PRICELESS**

\$150.45 has been reinvested for 2014 Kits with 46 Kits in Current Inventory

PROFITS (MINUS RE-INVESTMENT IN REAP) ARE UTILIZED FOR THE FUNDING OF PLATEAU DISCOVERY GARDEN (PDG) CCMGA PROJECTS.

2013 Stats: Member participation: 26 MG Hours: 199.15 hours

ADDITIONAL DONATIONS:

The UT Plateau AgResearch and Education Center donated the room space and tables for assembly as well as a suitable storage area for the assembled garden kits.

Our UT Extension Agent as well as the director of the UT Plateau AgResearch and Education Center volunteered to deliver ordered kits to other counties when traveling to scheduled meetings and events in those counties.

RESULTS: 500 WORDS OR LESS WORD COUNT (495)

PROMOTION (AWARENESS):

- Herald Citizen Newspaper 2 articles (2012/2013)
- CRMC Wellness Program & Hospital Literature 1 article and electronic notifications
- Cumberland County Newspaper 2 articles (2012/2013)
- Cumberland County Library..... flyers – promotional material
- CCMGA Events: CCMGA Spring Garden Show; PDG Fall Gardeners Fest
- CCMGA Website
- Public Broadcasting five (5) PB Stations in the Cumberland County Area
- UT Plateau AgResearch and Education CenterPromotion and Sales

Education and Extended Learning:

Burgess Falls Park Youth Camp (Two Camps - White County and Putnam County Youth Ages 5-10)

- Two 40 minute vegetable garden classes taught by Burgess Falls Park Ranger and MG.
- 30 Kits (business sponsor donation) gifted to children to apply what they learned and grow a home garden – extending and reinforcing learning.

Crossville Library

- 35 minute Garden Class presented by two CCMGA members
- 17 REAP Kits purchased (18 participants)

RHEA COUNTY

- 25 Kits purchased by RCMG for public Square Foot Garden Class taught by CCMGA member
- 20 attendees

Jefferson County

- 10 Kits purchased for Youth education purposes

PC Soil Conservation District Plant Sale

- CCMGA volunteered as a plant advisor at the PCSCD Sale.
- Sold REAP Garden Kits – educated and raised funds for PCSCD** and CCMGA
- ** PCSCD uses funds for youth education programs in schools
- 17 Kits were displayed and sold out immediately.

Wilson County

- CCMGA shared the program with Wilson County
- 300 Kits for 2013 replicated by Wilson County for education/fundraising.

ADDITIONAL PROMOTION AND SALES:

- COOKEVILLE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER WELLNESS PROGRAM (29 KITS)
- TNMG Winter School
- CCMGA Spring Garden Show & Fall Gardeners Fest - demonstration REAP Begin Vegetable Garden
- UT Extension Office
- Intern Classes & CCMGA Square Foot Garden Class (Public)

2013 DEMOGRAPHICS - RESULTS OF 67 QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED:

(Purpose- determine audience demographics to improve kits, determine future class needs and marketing)

Ages	0-20	44.7%
	21-35	7.5%
	36- 49	12.0%
	50+	34.0%
	Not Indicated	1.80%

NO GARDENING EXPERIENCE:	17.9%
OCCASIONAL GARDENING:	49.3%
GARDEN OFTEN:	31.1%
NOT INDICATED	1.7%

OF THE REGISTRANTS.....

31.4%	HAVE NEVER GROWN A VEGETABLE GARDEN
85.0%	HAVE NEVER HAD A SOIL TEST
82.0%	HAVE NEVER USED THE SERVICES OF THE UT EXTENSION OFFICE
13.5%	PURCHASED AS GIFTS

SOME COMMENTS:

“THIS WAS MY FIRST GARDEN AND I LEARNED A LOT!! DEFINITELY WILL EXPAND THE GARDEN NEXT YEAR”

(male- 50+- first time gardener)

“ *(father)* ...assisted our daughter in planting the kit.....she *(our daughter)* has enjoyed gardening for a few years, and the new crop types were fun to try. Yes, she learned from it. We plan to garden again”

(Parent of BF Camp Participant)

“Used as a door prize for a silent auction fund raiser.. It was included in a ‘basket of garden items’.”

(Rescue Mission)

“I’m buying five.....all for gifts to share gardening. What a great idea”

(At the Soil Conservation Sale)

The most important **SEEDS** TNMG plant:

- S**haring
- E**ducation
- E**ncouragement

**Demonstration
Support**