Orchard Provides Hands on Opportunity

Educational community orchard gives residents the ability to make informed economical purchases.

The Situation
In Pembina County alone, there are 3,879 housing units. Trees and shrubs are found in every yard and in every park. Questions regarding the health and care of trees are the most common topic in a given growing season. A common theme of these questions result from the planting of trees and shrubs that are not suitable for our climate. Homeowners frequently purchase varieties that are ill suited for their soil type, drainage situation, and climate, resulting in hundreds of dollars invested on plants that will not survive.

Extension Response
Pembina County Agent Samantha Lahman wrote the grant application, designed the project and chaired the project committee. Agent Lahman organized: 5 informational sessions, 17 planning meetings, 1 field and consultation trip, 6 Junior Master Gardener classes with youth, and multiple tours and open house events. Additionally, agent Lahman managed over 15 volunteers in order to complete the project. The planning committee worked with the Pembina County Museum, Icelandic State Park, Soil Conservation District and local businesses to build an approximate one acre orchard just outside of Cavalier, ND. Planting, watering, and fencing was done on a volunteer basis in conjunction with the Pembina County Historical Society.

Impacts
The orchard now houses nearly 100 fruit bearing trees and shrubs and provides hands on learning opportunities in pruning, variety selection, harvesting, and planting procedures. Home owners are able to make suggestions for varieties and those varieties can be planted in the orchard and provide a snapshot of how these types and kinds will grow and produce in our region. The information gained assures that homeowners will not purchase species and varieties that will be unable to overwinter or produce, thus saving them hundreds of dollars in wrongful purchases. The orchard also provides them with the proper techniques to care for and manage correctly selected trees.

Feedback
“Seeing how these trees grow and tasting what they produce lets me know exactly what I should be planting and growing.” —Cavalier Resident

“This project is huge! It promotes horticulture, specialty crop production, entrepreneurship, and healthy eating habits. It really is amazing.” — Orchard Planning Committee Member

Public Value Statement
Public growing spaces provide opportunities for North Dakota residents to learn and make informed and economical decisions for home planting.

Primary Contact
Samantha Lahman
701.265.8411
Samantha.lahman@ndsu.edu

Collaborators
Kathy Wiederholt, Fruit Project Manager NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center

Non Extension Collaborators
Burgess’s Greenhouse and Nursery
Miller’s Garden Center
Pembina County Soil Conservation District
Pembina County Historical Society