

OSUEA Hoecker Grants Program Report
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Update: Tri-County Master Gardener Plant Clinic Expansion

Jan 2018

(Note: the original *timelines* of the project were not met due to the primary project leader having extended, long- term medical issues, now resolved.)

Jan-Feb 2017: project leader re-evaluated equipment needs, consulted with others, and made new equipment choices that fit into the budget provided through the Hoecker fund. Equipment ordered.

Spring 2017: Hand-held camera “scopes” were delivered to Lake and Harney counties in spring of 2017. These have been used since that time to take pictures of plant and insect samples that came into the Extension offices in those counties. Cameras for larger scopes are not compatible: new round of discussion, cameras returned, different items ordered.

May-Dec 2017: The hand-held scopes have been used to identify 25 plant and insect specimens, and represent 38 contacts between Klamath County Master Gardener Program and gardening consumers in Lake and Harney Counties, where there are not active Master Gardener Programs.

August 2017: Project Coordinator delivers insect mounting and preserving equipment to the counties to make it easier for the staff to take good pictures for submission. Larger microscope cameras arrive, and coordinator starts to learn to use them and accompanying software in preparation of training staff in other counties.

Feb 8-9, 2018: Scheduled delivery of compound scopes and microscope cameras, and training of staff, in Harney and Lake Counties. Training will include introduction to additional ways staff can submit samples for diagnostic help, i.e. newly formed OSU Master Gardener Diagnostics Facebook Group. These alternative resources can assist with diagnosis when project coordinator/ Klamath Master Gardeners are not available. Use of the diagnostic group on Facebook means that Master Gardeners all over the state will be able to see the pictures and potentially either aid in diagnosis or learn from the diagnosis that others make.

Impact Evaluation: Because of the Plant Clinic renovations that took place in Klamath in 2017, comparison of contact numbers in 2017 and previous years does not enable us to see that this project led to a greater number of contacts. Plant Clinic records are now managed in a database, and we have a better system to capture our contacts, so we should be able to see an increase in future years.

Future: The delivery of the stronger microscopes and cameras will broaden the range of things that can be photographed, and will take place in time to be of value for the 2018 growing season. Improvements that took place at the Plant Clinic in Klamath County over the course of 2017 will enhance the connection and communication between the three counties further, and facilitate speedier answers to consumer questions.