

Extension booth at the Bozeman Farmer's market, 2008
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A booth to provide information about MSU Extension activities to the urban and suburban community was set up each Saturday at the Bozeman Farmers market (Fairgrounds, Bozeman, MT) from 21 June to 13 September, 2008. As seen in the pictures above, we set up a table with an Extension Banner, distributed MontGuides and fact sheets from Montana State University, had displays to draw people in to ask questions about each topic, and answered questions from the community. A press release was sent out each week and used in the local paper and on the radio to popularize this activity.

The booth was staffed by Mary Burrows (9 of 13 weeks) or another plant pathologist to identify common pests. If the pest or disorder was not identifiable at the booth, these were brought back to the Schutter Diagnostic Lab for identification and recommendations to the client. A new topic was presented by the special guest each week. We recorded the number of people asking questions during each week (table).

Date	Guest	Topic	# Questions
6/21	Clain Jones	Soil Fertility	85
6/28	Amber Kirkpatrick	Water quality	81
7/5	Fabian Menalled	Weeds	115
7/12	Bill Hoch and Alan Dyer	Trees and shrubs for the home	109
7/19	County Fair Week		
7/26	John Paterson and Nina Zidack	What does natural and organic really mean in beef cattle?	80
8/2	Jack Riesselman and Hayden Ferguson	Montana Ag Live / Plant Disease, Soil Science	65
8/9	Holly Sessoms	Water Quality	90
8/16	Dave Baumbauer	Bees	85
8/23	Tracy Dougher	Native turfgrass for the home	125
8/30	Roy Fenster	Wildlife	105
9/6	Kara Schile	Forest Health and Fire Prevention	67
9/13	Fabian Menalled and Jane Mangold	Weeds	108
		Total	1115

Some of the most common questions asked this year were about pine bark beetle and other spruce and aspen disorders caused by drought. Many people commented that the growing season was about 2 weeks behind the previous year and their garden's development was correspondingly behind. The most common sample brought to the booth for pest identification was aphids.

I identified a couple of MontGuides needed for plant disease disorders including apple diseases, which was prepared by Nina Zidack, Cheryl Moore-Gough and myself and was released in December, 2008. Kara Schile will be working on a 'proper watering of woody ornamentals in the home landscape' MontGuide to give people a 'recipe' for proper tree watering in the arid High Plains environment. I expect this to be available by June of 2009.

The number of samples and questions significantly increased as compared to 2007. In 2007 we had 628 questions recorded, and in 2008 we had 1115 questions. Additional aspects were added to the booth this year included a *'tip of the week'* which many people would read and point out to their companions although they did not always stop to ask us about the topic. Most of the tips involved proper watering in the home landscape. We also started an *'invasive pest of the week'* billboard to educate the public about invasive pests and recruit first detectors. Featured pests included the Emerald Ash Borer, Japanese Beetle, and Purple Loosestrife. *We distributed approximately 455 copies of MSU Extension's 'Big Sky, Small Acres' magazine* in order to encourage subscriptions.

Another new activity this year was the attendance of two graduate students (Oliver Neher, Mary Lollis) from the Department of Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology who wished to gain Extension experience. Both students expressed to me that it was a fun and worthwhile activity.

Positive aspects of this activity:

- Highly visible.
- Reached an audience that might otherwise not be aware of Extension activities.
- Provided a friendly and convenient location to get the public's questions answered, especially plant disease, insect and weed identification.
- Increased public awareness of the Schutter Diagnostic Clinic for their plant disease, insect, and plant identification needs.
- This was a good opportunity for specialists to interact and learn more about each other's programs.
- The questions helped us to identify and prioritize needs for publications and press releases.
- The farmer's market coordinators liked the booth because it drew people to the farmer's market who otherwise may not have come.
- Each special guest enjoyed their time and expressed a willingness to do it again next year.

I would like to extend my thanks to Extension publications, the staff was very helpful. Rick Jackson sent over a box of pens and post-it notes for distribution. We used these to write down phone numbers of other specialists who could answer questions and gave the entire booklet of post-its and the pen to the client. Many were surprised and appreciative. MontGuides from publications always came very quickly through campus mail.