

Gardening in the Panhandle: LIVE!

A Lesson in Harnessing Teamwork and Technology to Better Reach Clientele

Leonard, D.; McConnell, J.; Anderson, E.; Bodrey, R.; Bolles, B.; Dunning, S.; Greer, S.; Lollar, M.; Orwat, M.; Salinas, M.; Sprague, D.; Tancig, M.; Williams, L.; Williams, P.; Dale, A.; Freeman, J.; Hylton, T.; Jackson, S.; Jameson, M.; Kalamán, H.; Knox, G.; Marble, C.; Martini, X.; Stevenson, C.

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded in 2020, UF/IFAS Extension Agents were unable to perform traditional in-person educational programs and needed an innovative way to reach residential horticulture clientele. Inspired by Agents in south Florida offering “Ask an Agent Anything” online seminars, but wanting to focus more on specific, timely topics, the Northwest District Horticulture Program Implementation Team (PIT) collaborated to create a similar program series called *Gardening in the Panhandle LIVE!*

Each session covered a seasonally relevant topic with knowledgeable panelists based on their individual specialties. The series was broadcast using both Zoom Webinar videoconferencing technology and Facebook Live to capture the largest possible audience. To comply with ADA guidelines for hearing disabled clientele, episode recordings were edited with closed captioning for YouTube. Delivering each episode requires a team of 7-9 agents in the following roles: 3-4 panelists, an episode “host”, a Zoom technician, and several “behind the scenes” moderators. While the episode’s host and panelists are answering questions, the moderators are adding resource links to chats, answering pop-up questions, and filtering and forwarding potential on-air questions to the emcee.

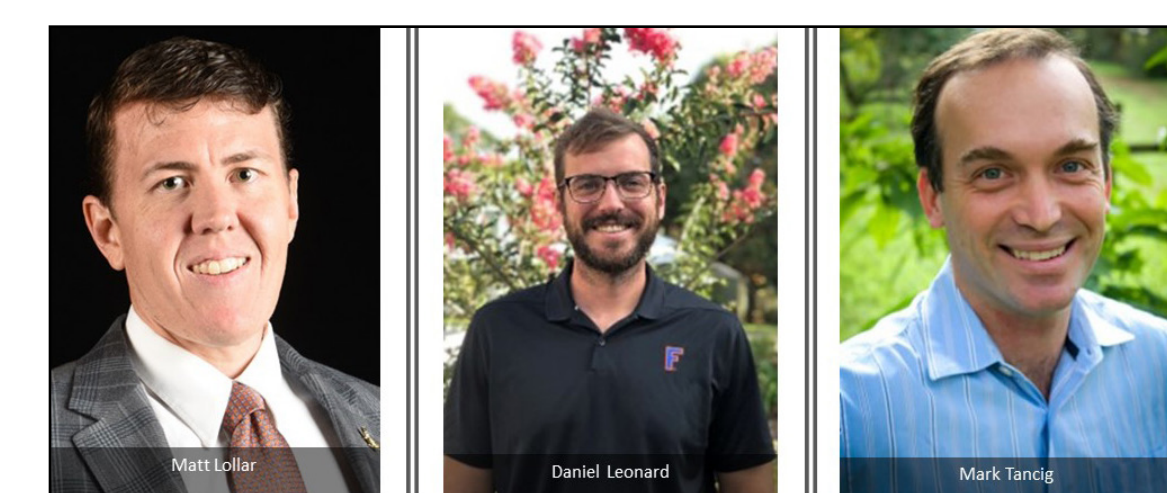
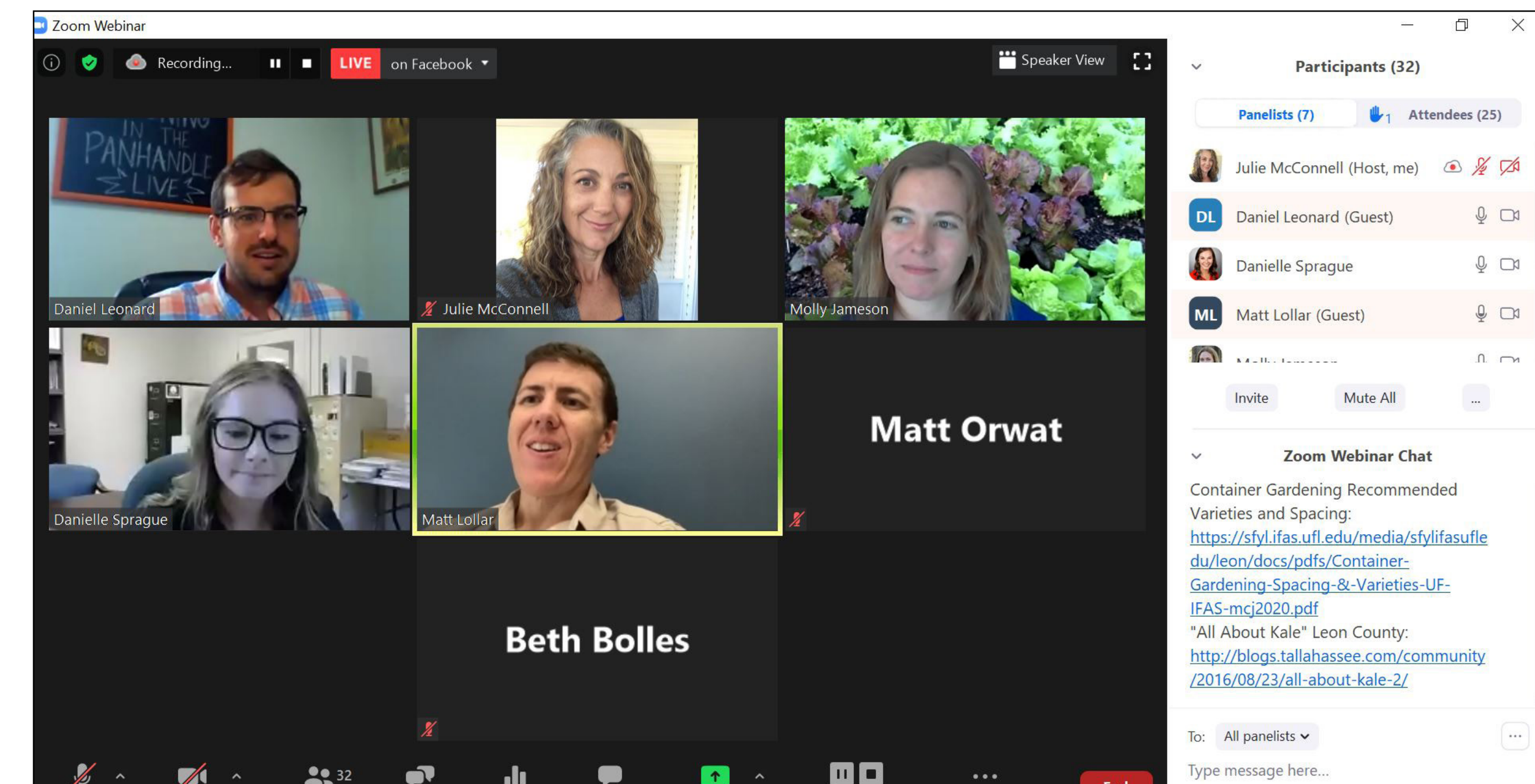
The innovative collaboration created 13 episodes engaged a total of 871 live viewers in 2020 on various social media platforms. Follow up survey participation was completed at a rate of 22% (191/871).

97%

(186/191) of respondents reported **knowledge gain** in at least one **Florida-Friendly Landscaping Principle**.

88%

(168/191) of respondents reported a **plan to adopt** at least one **Florida-Friendly Landscaping Principle** as a result of participation in the program.



Moderators: Gardening in the Panhandle LIVE! Open Q&A

The Northwest District Horticulture Team is continuing to develop this program into 2021 and beyond.