

# Building the Resilience of Georgia's Green Industry

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## SITUATION & OBJECTIVES

The COVID-19 pandemic forced property owners to spend more time at home and demand for services from Georgia's Green Industry surged. The Georgia Green Industry maintains over \$11 billion in economic impact and employees over 110,000 in the state. As demand grew, meeting the changing needs of Green Industry Businesses became a critical goal of Extension programming.

The objective of this program was to provide educational opportunities for Georgia Green Industry professionals on the implications of COVID-19 for their businesses in an attempt to increase their resilience and adaptability in a changing economic climate. A secondary objective was to increase access and participation in Georgia Green Industry Certification Programs by developing a central Green Industry Certification and Training Portal and offering no-cost registration to businesses throughout the state.

## COLLABORATORS

The project team included: UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant, UGA Small Business Development Center, UGA Extension, UGA Center for Urban Agriculture, UGA Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, Georgia Forestry Commission, Victory Gardens, Savannah Tree Foundation, City of Savannah, Georgia Green Industry Association, Georgia Urban Ag Council and Georgia Recreation and Parks Association



## METHODS

- CARES Act Grant Recipient of \$34,000
- 3 webinars hosted from January-March 2021
- Registration conducted through Qualtrics
- Topics included: COVID-19 safety protocols, impacts of COVID-19 on Georgia Green Industries and enhancing business adaptability and resilience through employee training
- Development and implementation of Green Industry Certification and Training Portal, which contains interactive study tools, knowledge quizzes and educational videos for the Georgia Certified Landscape Professional Program, Georgia Certified Plant Professional Program and SuperCrew Online Training Course
- No-cost registration for these professional development opportunities, conducted through Qualtrics



## RESULTS & IMPACT

- Webinar series had 76 attendees with an additional 161 views of the programs on YouTube.
- Development and implementation of the Georgia Green Industry Certification and Training Portal
  - Portal contains interactive study tools, knowledge quizzes, and educational videos for Georgia Green Industry Certification Programs
- In July 2021, 46 individuals from 29 companies in Georgia were accepted for the Georgia Green Industry Certification Programs outlined below.
  - Grant funding covered training for all 46 individuals for a total value of \$11,825
  - Accepted applicants came from 21 counties: Bibb, Chatham, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Columbia, Coweta, Decatur, Douglas, Floyd, Forsyth, Fulton, Hall, Heard, Houston, Lincoln, Monroe, Muscogee, Paulding and Pickens.

<b>GEORGIA CERTIFIED LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL (GCLP)</b> (developed for landscape-related companies) <b>20 participants from 19 companies</b> <b>\$3,300 value</b>  Grant-sponsored access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Green Industry Certification and Training Portal</li><li>• Printed Study Manual</li><li>• Testing Fees for Certification</li></ul>	<b>GEORGIA CERTIFIED PLANT PROFESSIONAL (GCPP)</b> (developed for greenhouse, nursery, and garden centers) <b>15 participants from 13 companies</b> <b>\$2,475 value</b>  Grant-sponsored access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Green Industry Certification and Training Portal</li><li>• Printed Study Manual</li><li>• Testing Fees for Certification</li></ul>	<b>UGA SUPERCREW PROGRAM</b> <b>11 participants from 8 companies</b> <b>\$6,050 value</b>  Grant-Sponsored Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 year streaming of 11 part video series</li><li>• English &amp; Spanish Versions</li><li>• Access for 15 devices and certificates</li><li>• Total impact = 165 employees</li></ul>
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**440 INDIVIDUALS REACHED | 46 TRAINING ENROLLMENTS | \$11,825 INDUSTRY SAVINGS | \$34,000 GRANT FUNDING**