

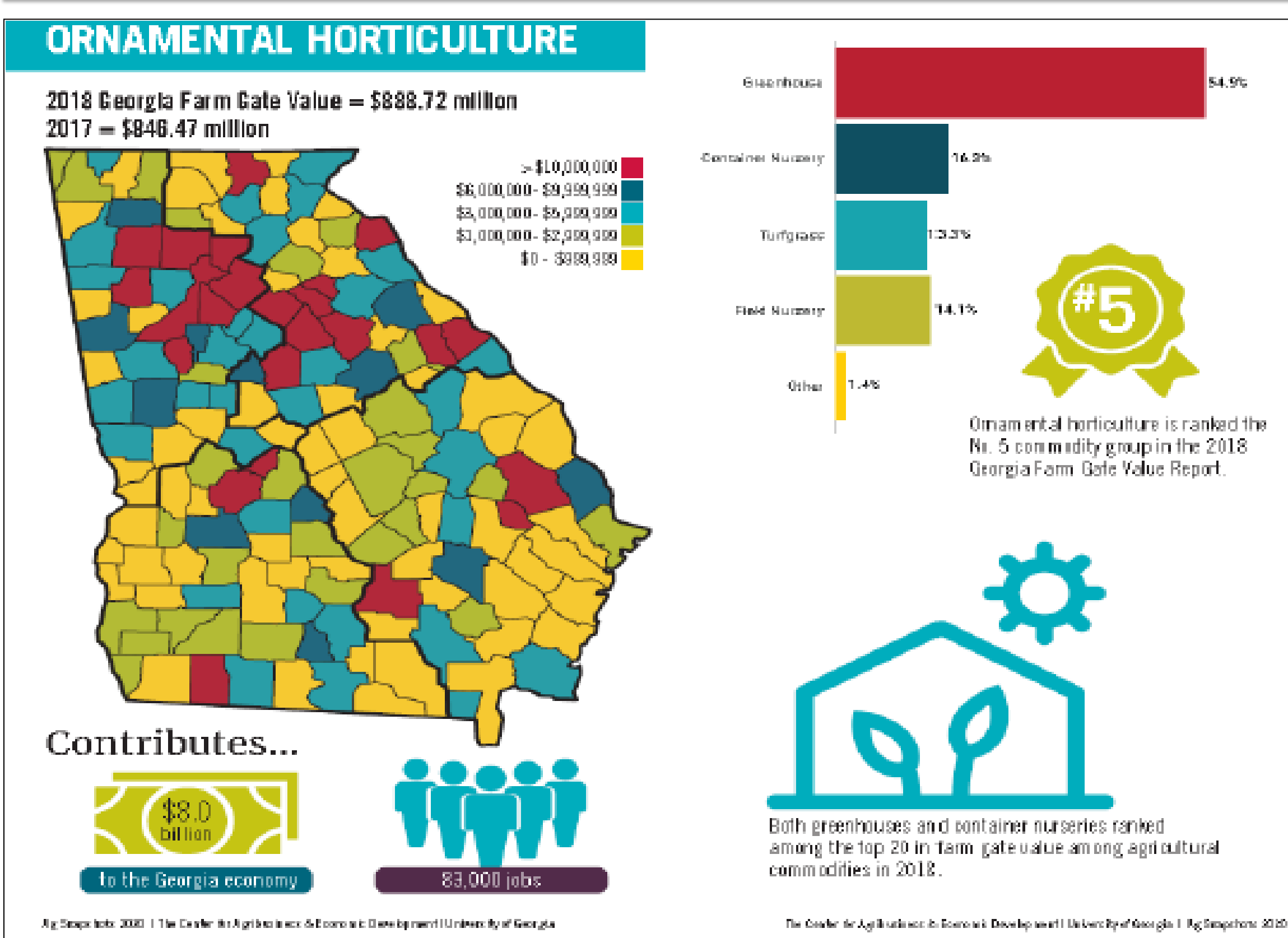


# ENHANCING PROFESSIONALISM WITH GREEN INDUSTRY CERTIFICATIONS IN GEORGIA

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The ornamental horticulture-green industry contributes significantly to the economy.

**Situation**

According to the University Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development, the Green Industry in the State of Georgia contributes over \$8 billion to the state's economy and provides 84,400 jobs. As the population of Georgia continues to grow, an ever-increasing need for specialized training and certification exists to provide businesses with a competitive and resilient workforce skilled in new methods and technologies. Emerging issues of concern such as water quality, pesticide safety, integrated pest management, turfgrass management, and environmental protection require that the industry be informed on the latest best management practices.

**Response**

Certification programs are a means of verifying technical proficiency and developing industry professionalism. UGA Extension, in collaboration with state green industry professional organizations, has developed two certification programs. Georgia Certified Landscape Professionals (GCLP) is for landscape professionals and consists of a written section testing general knowledge, plan take off, as well as plant and pest identification. Eight hands-on sections test proficiency grading and drainage, pesticide safety, and pruning. Georgia Certified Plant Professional (GCPP) is for those employed in nurseries, garden centers, greenhouses and other similar enterprises. It consists of two-parts about general knowledge and plant identification.



### GCLP Exam Subject Matter

- Plan Take-Off
- Plant ID
- Pest ID
- Grading / Drainage
- Plan Layout
- Pruning
- Tree Planting & Staking
- Irrigation
- Pesticide Safety
- Equipment Ops & Safety
- Sod Installation



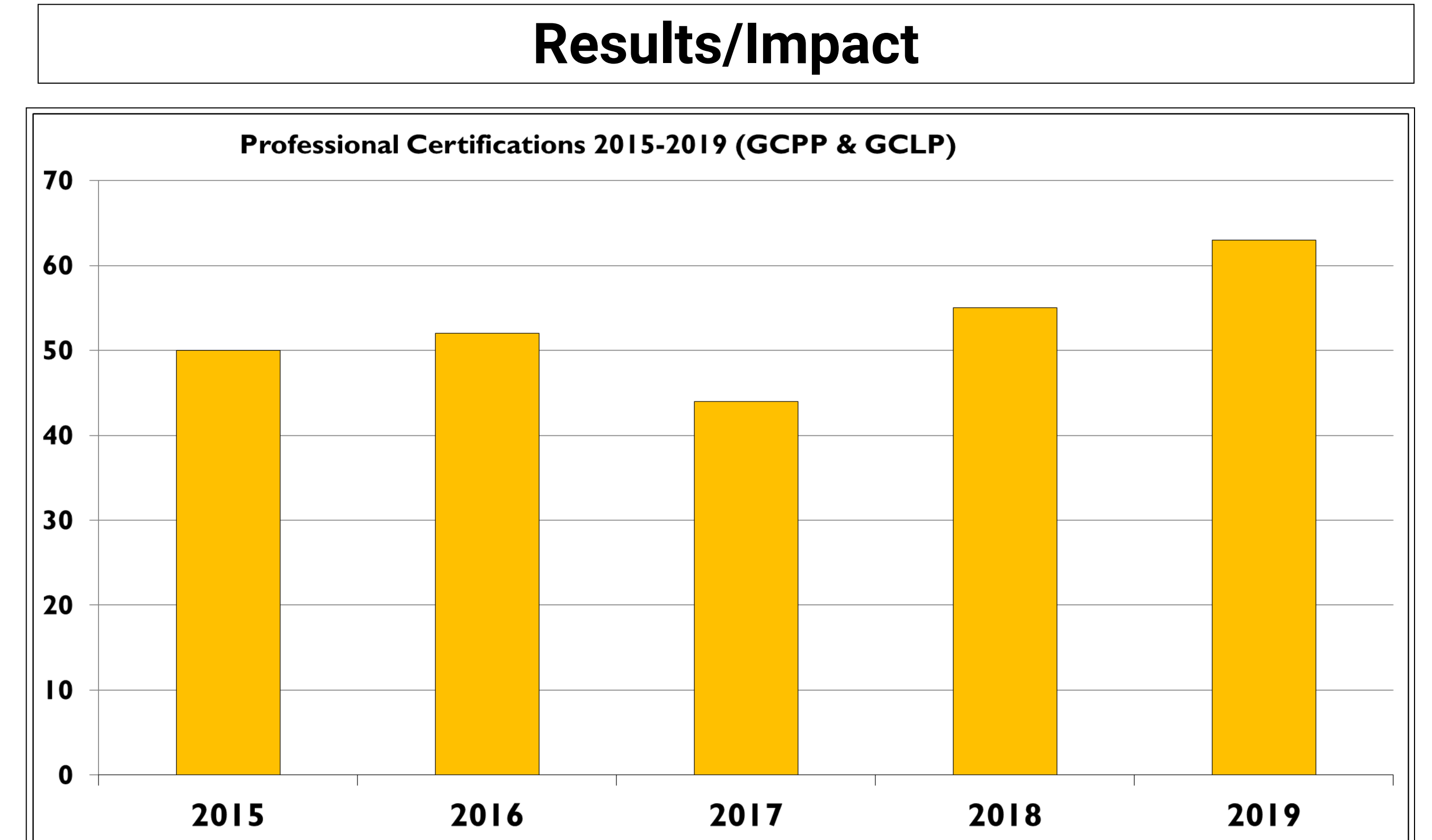
### GCPP Exam Subject Matter

- Plant Growth & Development
- Retail Plant Management
- Ornamental Plant ID
- Pest ID
- Lawn Care
- Tree Care
- Fruit & Vegetable Plants
- Salesmanship
- Merchandising

Highlights of featured contents in the GCLP and GCPP programs. Participants must demonstrate proficiency in the subject matter related to their professions.



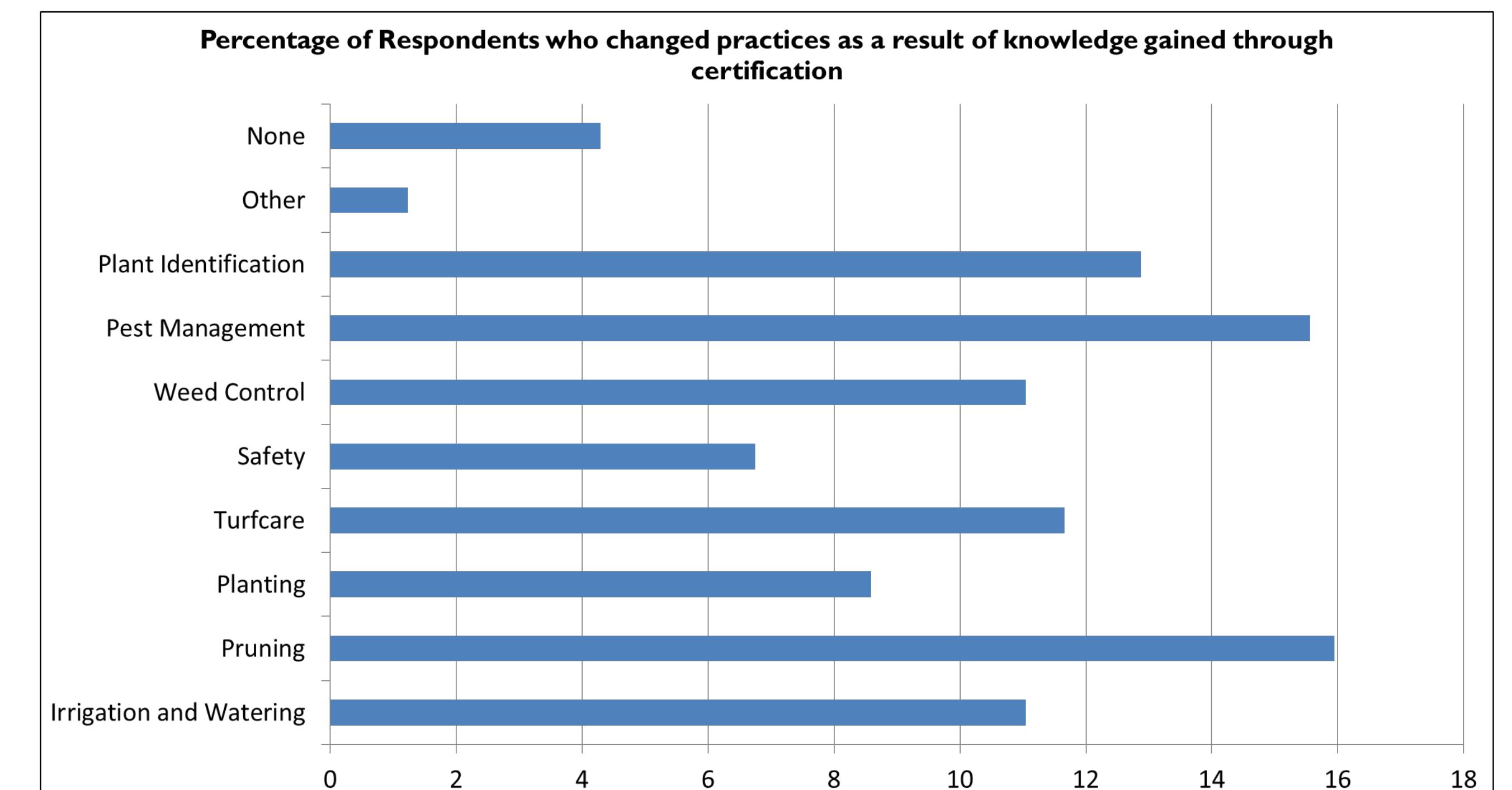
The GCPP features a study list of 425 plants and participants are presented with a random selection of 100 plant specimens for the examination. GCLP program features a study list of 280 and participants are tested using a sample of 50 plants. Participants must pass exams with a minimum score of 70%.



Since 2015, a total of 289 people have attained professional certification, (276 GCPP and 26GCLP).

### Key Highlights of the GCPP/GCLP Program

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| GCLP: Since Inception (1993):     | GCPP Since 1990:                  |
| • 1,200 Applicants                | • 2,995 Applicants                |
| • 356 Graduates                   | • 1,913 Graduates                 |
| • 2,425 Study Manuals Distributed | • 3,234 Study Manuals Distributed |



Rabinowitz, A., Collins, J, and Huber, G. Survey of Georgia Certified Landscape Professionals. July 24, 2020

### Quotes from Industry Practitioners:

*"Employees at our company earn a \$1.00 per hour pay raise for certifying."*

*"Professional certification helps raise the bar"*

A complete rewrite of the manuals is underway. The vision for advancing these programs includes a shift from being a self-study program to a more structured series of review classes. Increased graduate networking and a public awareness campaign will focus on increasing program recognition. For the GCLP program, Georgia and Alabama have a reciprocal agreement individuals and contents of the study manual.